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(HANSARD)

Friday, October 5, 2018

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

CONTENTS

(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, October 5, 2018

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

● (1005)

[*English*]

COMPREHENSIVE AND PROGRESSIVE AGREEMENT FOR TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP IMPLEMENTATION ACT

Hon. Bardish Chagger (for the Minister of International Trade Diversification) moved that Bill C-79, an act to implement the comprehensive and progressive agreement for trans-Pacific partnership between Canada, Australia, Brunei, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Omar Alghabra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege once again to speak about the comprehensive and progressive agreement for trans-Pacific Partnership, the CPTPP, and the benefits for Canadians from coast to coast to coast and across all sectors of our economy. Through the CPTPP, our government is demonstrating our commitment to growing our economy and strengthening the middle class by expanding and diversifying Canada's trade and investment relations.

Canada is a nation built on trade, and as a medium-sized economy, trade is fundamental to our continued prosperity and economic growth. While Asia has more than doubled in importance as a destination for Canadian goods and services since the turn of the century, Canada has lost market share to our competitors, because previous governments were not as seized of the need for strategic, longer-term integration with the region's fast-growing economies. The CPTPP would help remedy this. It would be the cornerstone agreement for Canada to diversify our trade and investment towards Asia and enhance our export presence in the region.

The 11 CPTPP members represent a total of 495 million consumers and 13.5% of global GDP. Canada's exports to our CPTPP partners totalled nearly $27 billion in 2017. The CPTPP would provide Canadians with the tremendous opportunity to continue to expand their business in Asia.

Trade has long been a powerful engine that drives the Canadian economy. Canadian jobs and prosperity depend heavily on our connectivity with other countries around the world. In fact, one in five jobs in Canada are related to exports, while Canadian exports amount to nearly one-third of Canada's GDP. Opening borders to trade and investment and diversifying our trading partners has the potential to boost Canada's wealth and make us less vulnerable to changing conditions in any one market, and it is the creation of wealth that leads to more jobs.

Canadian small and medium-sized enterprises, in particular, are looking for our government to open up new markets for potential exports, and the CPTPP would help us deliver on this task. Implementing and ratifying the CPTPP would strengthen our economic ties to the 10 other CPTPP members, which include seven new free trade agreement partners: Australia, Brunei, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore and Vietnam. Once the CPTPP enters into force, Canada would have preferential access to 51 different countries through 14 trade agreements, representing nearly 1.5 billion consumers and over 60% of the global economy.

The CPTPP is projected to boost Canada's economy by $4.2 billion over the long term, and that growth would be driven by increased exports of goods and services and increases in investment. This would mean more jobs and more prosperity for Canadians.

For trade in goods, the CPTPP would help Canadian businesses increase their sales and profits by eliminating virtually all tariffs, most of which would be eliminated upon entry into force of the agreement, and by establishing mechanisms to address non-tariff barriers to create more predictable and transparent trading conditions.

The CPTPP would allow Canadian companies to level the playing field with competitors that currently enjoy preferential access to key markets, such as Japan, Malaysia and Vietnam, while gaining a competitive advantage over other countries that currently do not have the same level of access. It would help Canadian companies establish customer relationships, networks and other joint partnerships and would offer Canada the opportunity to further integrate with global supply chains.

Opening new markets to our products means that Canada would be at an advantage in exporting more agriculture and agrifood, fish and seafood, industrial machinery, and everything in between.

New markets for our agriculture and agrifood products would mean more opportunities abroad for pork from British Columbia, beef from Alberta, wheat from Saskatchewan, canola from Manitoba, icewine from Ontario, maple syrup from Quebec, blueberries from New Brunswick and Nova Scotia and potato products from Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador, just to name a few.

Opening new markets for our fish and seafood industry would mean more opportunities for salmon, halibut, lobster, clams, mussels and snow crab, supporting close to 76,000 Canadian jobs based mostly in rural and coastal regions from coast to coast to coast.

Opening new markets would mean opportunities for Canada's diverse and productive manufacturing sectors, such as aerospace, chemicals, cosmetics, industrial machinery, medical devices, metal and minerals, pharmaceuticals and plastics.

I have given just a snapshot of Canada's vibrant economy, and there are many more sectors in which exporters would benefit from the CPTPP. Securing preferential access to CPTPP markets would mean that almost all Canadian products could be exported to our CPTPP partners without facing tariffs. Upon full implementation of the agreement, 99% of tariff lines for CPTPP parties would become duty-free, covering 98% of Canada's current total exports to CPTPP markets.

The benefits of the CPTPP would not stop there. In addition to addressing traditional trade-policy issues, such as tariffs and technical barriers to trade, the CPTPP would cover trade in services, investment, intellectual property, government procurement and state-owned enterprises. These parts of the agreement would serve to provide Canadian companies, service providers and investors alike with transparency, predictability and certainty in their access to CPTPP markets.

For example, the national treatment and most-favoured-nation provisions, combined with a ratchet mechanism, would mean that Canadian service providers' and investors' access to CPTPP markets could only improve over time as they took steps toward greater liberalization, including when they completed free trade agreement negotiations with other countries around the world. This means that the CPTPP would not only open new markets for Canada today but that our access would improve in the future.

This would be complemented by the commitments made on government procurement in the CPTPP, which would establish fair, open and transparent rules for competitive procurement markets. Canadian businesses would enjoy equal treatment vis-à-vis domestic suppliers when bidding for government contracts in CPTPP markets. As a result, Canadian suppliers would benefit from new opportunities in markets such as Australia, Brunei, Malaysia and Vietnam while gaining expanded government procurement access with existing FTA partners, such as Chile and Peru. It is now clearer than ever that the CPTPP is a big deal for Canadian businesses and workers.

● (1010)

We are making good on our commitment to create opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises and to generate economic growth that will benefit all Canadians. This agreement would tear down barriers and build a bridge across the Pacific for Canadian exporters of goods and services.

With the CPTPP, Canada would send a clear signal to the world that it stands firm in its support for a free, rules-based international trading system. In the wake of rising protectionist sentiments around the world, the ratification of the CPTPP would not just secure economic benefits for us today but would solidify our role in the economic architecture of Asia tomorrow and for decades to come. For these reasons, our government is committed to ratifying and bringing the CPTPP into force, and it is why I encourage hon. members of the House to support the bill before us today.

I want to also take a moment to relate the benefits of the CPTPP to my city, the great city of Mississauga. The city of Mississauga is host to 10% of the Fortune 500 companies in Canada. Ten per cent of Fortune 500 companies have their headquarters situated in Mississauga. Most, if not all, of these companies, including the aerospace industry, pharmaceuticals, food processors, engineering companies and financial institutions, would see tremendous benefits from the CPTPP. On top of that, this would be a tremendous opportunity for small and medium-sized enterprises in the city of Mississauga, which would find new access to new markets without any tariffs and with a mechanism to settle disputes that would guarantee them market access.

Mississauga is blessed with a culture of entrepreneurship. There are many entrepreneurs and innovators starting new businesses in technology and the financial industry sector. All those industries and entrepreneurs would also benefit.

The third dimension I want to talk about is people-to-people ties. Mississauga, just like the rest of Canada, is extremely diverse. There are people from all backgrounds who have inherent ties to their ancestral homes, family links and business partners. They would be able to utilize these people-to-people links so that their businesses could benefit, grow their top lines, grow their profitability, hire more workers and expand their businesses.

The CPTPP is tremendously good news for the entire country, but in particular, for my city, the city of Mississauga and the entire Peel region.

The other point I want to talk about is opportunity costs. We cannot afford to miss signing and being a partner within the CPTPP partnership. Canadian businesses are expanding their business relationships in Asia, and if Canada misses the boat on being one of those countries to sign and enforce this agreement as early as possible, our businesses will miss the opportunity of establishing a beachhead in Asia. They will miss the opportunity by falling behind other businesses from other countries, and we cannot afford to do that, because we will lose jobs. Our businesses will lose a competitive advantage that they need today.

Canadians today, more than ever, believe in the importance of diversifying our trade. They know that while we have a healthy, productive and profitable relationship with our neighbours to the south, we can no longer depend on one customer. We need to diversify access to different markets, and this agreement offers our businesses and workers that potential.

● (1015)

I am also proud to stand as a member of a government that worked with our CPTPP partners to enhance the previous agreement, the TPP. We have suspended certain provisions that we felt would not have been beneficial for our sectors. We have suspended certain provisions that we thought could have had an infringement on our intellectual properties or copyrights.

On top of that, we have added bilateral side letters with all the CPTPP partners that guarantee and protect new labour standards, environmental standards and deal with non-tariff barriers. Those side letters are enforceable. There is a dispute mechanism that is prescribed within the CPTPP which not only enforces the clauses within the CPTPP, but also allows us to enforce those side letters that protect workers' rights, the environment, our culture and our intellectual properties.

We are expanding our markets for our business. We are defending the rights of our workers. We are ensuring we have mechanisms to resolve any disputes and deal with non-tariff barriers.

I am very proud to stand here today and share with Canadians the importance of this agreement. I encourage my colleagues in the House of Commons to come together.

I want to take a moment to thank my colleagues in the Conservative Party for their support. They have led the way among the opposition parties, encouraging other parties to support this agreement.

I also want to reach out to my colleagues in the Senate. Hopefully, very soon, they will receive the bill. I want to extend a hand to offer my support. I understand the Senate has to do it job. We look forward to working with it on passing the bill.

This is a good story for Canadians, for Canadian businesses and for Canadian workers. I look forward to seeing it come into force as quickly as possible.

● (1020)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to get a chance to speak today in the House, even though a time allocation motion has been moved for a subject as important as Bill C-79.

I listened carefully to my colleague's speech. The NDP supports balanced trade agreements that protect workers and jobs. With the agreement we are talking about today, over 58,000 workers will lose their jobs. Naturally, my colleague spoke highly of the agreement in his speech, but I would like to hear his thoughts on workers. With regard to labour, the CPTPP includes a complaint mechanism that makes workers whose rights have been violated responsible for proving that the violation had an impact on trade. I would like to hear what my colleague thinks.

Why do workers still have to prove that the violation affects trade?

[*English*]

Mr. Omar Alghabra: Mr. Speaker, I would like to dispute the member's assertion that Canadian workers will lose jobs because of this agreement. I totally disagree with that. I guess it is not a surprise that the NDP and our party disagree on this point. The New Democrats said the same thing about the previous NAFTA agreement and other trade agreements.

I am glad to report to the House and to all Canadians that those fears have not been realized. In fact, Canadians know that trade and open market access create jobs and wealth and are to the benefit of all businesses in Canada.

I am also happy to talk further about the fact that we now have standards and side letters with partners in the CPTPP which uphold labour standards. I am proud to say that those agreements, those side letters, are enforceable through the dispute mechanisms.

My colleague, the NDP trade critic has, frankly, had the opportunity to ask Global Affairs Canada officials about the enforceability of those side letters, about the enforceability of those standards. Those non-political, independent officials told her, with no ambiguity or evocation, that those side letters would protect labour rights and would be enforceable.

● (1025)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would ask my colleague how his party, his government, can put forward an agreement like this when we know full well that the price of joining was supply management, which we gave up to the other parties. They sacrificed our local farmers, our dairy, egg and poultry farmers, without announcing any compensation, without a single dollar or red cent being announced as compensation for our farmers.

We know our dairy farmers were sacrificed to sign the Canada-Europe agreement. The Conservatives announced $4.3 billion in compensation. What did we end up with? Just $250 million, and that was for an investment program, not even a compensation program. It did not work well.

Now we are getting ready to adopt the new TPP, without one red cent being given to our farmers, who are being sacrificed yet again. The same goes for the new NAFTA. I think this is unacceptable. I wonder if there is anyone in this government or party who is willing to stand up for our farmers and our dairy producers, especially in Quebec. I am looking around, but I do not see anyone.

[*English*]

Mr. Omar Alghabra: Mr. Speaker, this trade agreement has been the most consulted trade agreement in Canada's history. After the previous version, the TPP, was signed, we consulted Canadians for over two years. I want to thank all the stakeholders, Canadians, businesses, including members of the supply-managed sector, all those who participated in these consultations. I am proud to say that the outcome of those consultations were incorporated in the new version of the CPTPP.

Our party created supply management, and it continues to support supply management. This government and my colleagues in Quebec have been a proud voice that stands behind our farmers in the dairy and poultry sectors. Let there be no doubt that our government will always support our dairy farmers.

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is a trading nation. Our prosperity continues to be dependent on the trade we have with other countries in the world. To ensure our seniors continue to enjoy the high standard of living they have, to ensure our children also have the same benefits and high standard of living and to support our middle class, these sort of trade agreements are required.

Could my hon. colleague explain in more detail the need to diversify Canadian trade beyond North America and how this trade agreement helps increase the $27 billion in exports we have currently with 11 countries that are part of the CPTPP?

Mr. Omar Alghabra: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Nepean for his tireless work on behalf of his constituents. My colleague has been very eloquent in reminding us that we have a strong trading relationship with our neighbours to the south. Close to 75% of our trading activities go to the United States. While that is important and we need to do everything we can to maintain that relationship, it is important for us and our businesses to diversify our markets, to create new markets from which our businesses and workers can benefit and to create create more jobs and more wealth.

Canadians know today about the importance of diversification. We have some of the best industries in the world. We have the most skilled workers in the world. The rest of the world comes to Canada to help it with certain technologies and build certain infrastructure. Other countries need to benefit from our skilled workers in our health sector. They need to enjoy the benefits of our education system. There is tremendous demand for our technology and skilled labour.

Asia is one of the fastest growing economies in the world. The CPTPP will provide us with new access to Asia. Our commitment is to build on it and expand access for our businesses and our workers.

● (1030)

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals let it slip there a bit. They thanked the Conservatives for leading the way on this. Canadians sometimes wonder what the difference between the two parties really is on trade.

We have seen trade deal after trade deal, with promises of improving labour and environmental standards. We had that great show of force from the Prime Minister, that he would go into NAFTA 2.0 and include gender into the agreement. However, when the NAFTA new deal was signed, that somehow was left out.

We have seen trade deal after trade deal where the environment and labour standards are talked about, yet they are always side agreements. We can look at the TPP, or this new version they call "comprehensive" and "progressive", which was Canada's insistence. We can put lipstick on a pig, but it is still a pig. Calling something "progressive" does not make it so. If we look for those labour standards in the agreement, are they baked into the deal or are they just side deals? If we look for the environmental conditions, will they lift up countries that have poor records right now? All this agreement asks them to do is confirm their commitment to the environment. What does that exactly mean in a country that does not have a strong commitment to the environment as it is right now? It is the status quo.

Trade can lift up all countries, but the promise is often not met in reality. We have not seen labour practices improve in South and Central America. We have not seen them improve in Asia through the successive rounds of trade deals.

How can my hon. friend expect people to keep buying this thing the Liberals are selling by simply putting a bit of lipstick on it and calling it progressive?

Mr. Omar Alghabra: Mr. Speaker, speaking of pigs, hog farmers are extremely excited about this bill. They know the CPTPP will open up the new markets in Asia and Latin America for which they are looking. They have been advocating for months, if not years, for the Government of Canada to help them open new markets. They know that they have the highest-quality products in the world and they know that customers around the world are asking for that product.

Again, it is not a surprise that the NDP is fearmongering against any trade agreement. We saw that in the 1990s, and we see that today. I encourage my hon. colleague to get with the times and realize how important free trade agreements are for Canada and Canadian workers.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my Liberal colleague from Mississauga-Centre for his speech and for taking inspiration from what the Conservative Party did when it started this process.

My colleague from Skeena—Bulkley Valley just asked what the difference is between the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party. The answer is that the Conservative Party understands the economy, while the Liberal Party does not seem to be known for much of anything—but at least it generously built on our idea and our initiative to introduce Bill C-79, which is about the comprehensive and progressive agreement for trans-Pacific partnership.

The CPTPP is a new free trade agreement. It is good for the economy and for the government to open up new markets allowing us to prosper. By prospering I mean enabling our businesses to be very active internationally to increase revenues and create wealth. As a result, businesses and governments can then make more money available to create social programs and help the less fortunate.

Let us create wealth and provide social programs. At the moment, the Liberals are busy spending a lot of money, but they are using a process that was put in place by the Conservative Party to hopefully create some wealth.

The interesting thing is that the CPTPP opens up markets with Australia, Brunei, Canada, obviously, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam.

I still maintain that this was put in motion by the Conservative Party. The Liberals love to invoke the name of the former prime minister, a man I admire deeply. He is one of the reasons I am in politics today. Stephen Harper, an economist by trade who is no showman, took steps to grow Canada's economy, and I am glad he did.

This goes to show that the Liberals are just improvising. We saw it with NAFTA, now known as the USMCA. The "C" stands for "Canada". We get the lowest billing in the abbreviation because we are the last of the three countries to have signed or reached an agreement. This proves that the Liberals are improvising, which I find disquieting.

My leader, the leader of the Conservative Party, wrote to the Prime Minister of Canada this summer to speed up the negotiation process. Our government's negotiations with our neighbour to the south, the United States, have been dragging on for 13 months. I think that, strategically, it would have been a good idea to show the U.S. that we are not vulnerable, that even though they are a significant market, we want to develop other markets in order to have some leverage to negotiate with the U.S.

My leader got in touch with the Prime Minister to speed up the process. What is important for this treaty is to be among the first six signatories for the agreement to enter into force. Again, we are here discussing the CPTPP in October, on the eve of Thanksgiving, because of the Liberal government's improvisation, amateurism and lack of rigour. We are wasting time.

One thing we know in the world of economics is that when a player is missing and orders need to be filled, customers will start looking elsewhere if they are disappointed. It is the same when building a new head office, when there are opportunities to bring head offices here but companies choose to go somewhere else. You do not build a new head office every day, every week or every month. There are cycles and investments. When a company is located in a region or a country, transferring its head office to another country is a complex operation. It is a serious decision for corporate leaders to take.

● (1035)

Here is what we can read in Export Development Canada's website: "Free trade agreements like the CPTPP can: Help you reach new B2B customers; Give your firm a chance to bid on government contracts overseas; Buy goods and services with reduced or no tariffs".

That is a Government of Canada website promoting the benefits of a free trade agreement. I think that is what a government must do. The current government has been slow. It improvised and was not thorough. Maybe the Prime Minister felt like being on vacation this summer. We, as Conservatives, were ready to move that file forward and expedite the process. Unfortunately, the Prime Minister's answer to our leader was that it was not possible for him to do anything and that things would take their course. That is the reason why we are debating this bill today.

As I mentioned earlier, the agreement will come into effect 60 days after six countries have signed it. If we delay, if we are not one of the first six countries, it means that we are not helping to speed up the implementation of this agreement. Does the Liberal government really want to open markets? That is rather odd. Last Sunday evening, at 10 p.m., on the Lord's Day, the Prime Minister decided to hold a cabinet meeting here. Now he wakes up. There is an emergency and we need to move quickly. The government's amateurism shows us that it has irresponsibly sped things up too quickly with the USMCA. The "C" stands for little Canada, which is in the trio along with the large market of the United States.

This government is just not consistent, and that is what is unfortunate. The Liberals have sped up the process. I have no idea what bit them, although in October flies are usually hibernating. In any case, I do not know what bit the Prime Minister to make him decide to speed up the process and give without taking.

I am not an expert negotiator. I was not at the negotiating table with the United States. When one negotiates, there is usually give and take. There is leverage. One agrees to sacrifice "X" as long as the other party gives "Y". It is an old principle and it does not take a genius to make sure that there is a give and take. I said it in English so that everyone understands. That is what negotiating is all about.

Let us look at what the Liberal government took in exchange for what it gave. I have to say that I do not see anything in my notes. Nothing was gained. We give, we celebrate, we are happy and we say, "well done, mission accomplished". Yes, it is important to have a market with the United States, but we must not negotiate on bended knee. We have to stand up. A power balance needed to be established. The process was moving along, and then a fly bit someone around the table and it was decided that we had to move very quickly. It is quite dramatic.

Canada came in third in the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement. The United States and Mexico reached an agreement and told Canada it could join if it wanted to, but that, if it was not interested, they would go ahead as planned. Some position of power. Our Prime Minister's Liberal government opened up our dairy market for free; the U.S. is still denying our farmers and dairy producers access to its market. At least the CPTPP grants us access to the market.

● (1040)

The government caved in to the United States, allowing it to maintain the surtaxes on steel, aluminum and softwood lumber. We conceded, we negotiated, the other side found ways of exerting pressure, but then, after we came to an agreement, it failed to remove that pressure. That is quite something.

In addition, the agreement extends the data protection period for pharmaceuticals. That means that it will cost Canadians a lot more to stay healthy. That is an impressive bargaining achievement.

Moreover, limits will be placed on the development of the Canadian auto industry. Now there are quotas, where before there were none. What did we get in return?

There is a lot more in the agreement. I cannot address every item. That being said, the more we read, the more we find out, and the devil is in the details. What I am about to say has never been heard before: we will have to ask the President of the United States for permission before we enter into any trade agreements with other countries. I am about to fall off my chair—well, not literally. I do not understand.

Our Prime Minister, however, is happy with the negotiations. As I have said before, it is important to have a free trade agreement with the United States, since the U.S. market is very important for Canadians. It represents practically 80% of our exports. It is important, but not at any cost. The government just managed to survive the negotiations, and it is thrilled. We, however, got nothing in return.

We are told that the negotiations are over. A company in my riding, Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, does business in the U.S. and Canada. Unfortunately, its product is on the list of products saddled with surtaxes, a tool the U.S. used to exert pressure during the negotiations. If the company develops products in the U.S. to meet U.S. and Canadian needs and then imports them into Canada, it will have to pay a surtax.

Not to mention any names, Biscuits Leclerc is a well-known company with facilities in 20 countries. It is a Canadian company, and its head office is located in Canada. I am extremely pleased to say that it is located in my riding, more particularly in the Saint-Augustin-de-Desmaures industrial park. How important is the company? The industrial park is called the "Parc industriel François-Leclerc" in recognition of the company's decision to set up its head office there. The company is prosperous and believes in us—and we believe in it.

I will get back to my story. The company produces cookies and ships them to Canada. It produces its own products and exports them to Canada. Do you know what the annual surtax is for the company? One million dollars. The surtax is still in effect, despite the fact that the government is thrilled that everything is settled and proud of what a good job it did in the negotiations. That is quite an example of success.

After signing the agreement, Donald Trump gave a victory speech at a press conference. He was happy. He won, but what did Canada win? It barely survived.

● (1045)

The agreement has been negotiated, but the negotiations are not finished, since there are still surtaxes on both sides of the border, for example on steel and cookies. We were even told that the surtax on steel and aluminum would remain as a matter of national security. Why did we not use food safety during the negotiations to justify holding firm on supply management? Canadian producers' standards and controls for dairy and other types of production are higher in Canada in terms of safety and hygiene. Health Canada is doing a good job, but the rules are not the same in the U.S.

When we trade with another country or market with lower standards, that means that their production costs are lower. They can produce more at a lower cost. That is unfair competition. Why did the Liberal government negotiators not use food safety as an argument to close the door on supply management? The government told Canadian farmers that it would protect supply management. Great job! It protected nothing, and managed to open a breach. The other agreements included compensation and market access.

Yesterday, the Prime Minister met with farmers. He told them that the minister might give them full compensation. Now the government is backpedalling. People are seeing what we in the House have known for three years. This government is not in control. It consults, it talks the talk, but it is not proactive. Take, for example, the CPTPP, which we are discussing today. It is based on our government's work and I am very proud of that. We must have done something right at some point. Canada's economy is what it is because of the Conservative Party.

We did plenty of things right. Many Canadians I speak to, and I will have the opportunity to meet others because I will be in my riding next week, keep telling me that they miss the previous government, and that is music to my ears. It makes me happy. Canadians are beginning to see this government's true colours after its constant failures this summer.

I have a piece of advice for the Liberals. I am not an expert, but I have my sources. In Business Insider, Jeff Haden gave 12 negotiating tips. I would have commented on each and every one of them, but since I do not have enough time, I will simply list them: go first; be quiet; know what you want — that one brings up big question marks; assume the best case; avoid setting ranges; only make concessions for a reason; avoid getting cornered; make time your friend; ignore face value; give the other person room; forget about winning and losing; and create a relationship.

The Liberal Party negotiators completely failed in many of these areas. In fact, there is nothing to evaluate, since they did not get any results. I will have the opportunity to talk about this a bit more.

● (1050)

As I mentioned in my speech, we will support the agreement. Opening markets is important. First, we need to create wealth, and then we can establish social programs.

Mr. Sven Spengemann (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier for his speech.

[*English*]

Unfortunately, he took the occasion to restate one of the biggest myths in Canadian political thought today, that Conservative governments are good for the economy.

Under the former Prime Minister, the economy flatlined for 10 years, the worst economic record since the Great Depression. There is a very simple explanation for that: The Canadian economy does well when we invest in Canadians. The Conservatives failed to invest in entrepreneurship and innovation. We made those investments. They failed to invest in science and technology. We made those investments. They failed to invest in defence and trade, and we made those investments. As a result, today, the Canadian economy is at the top of the G7.

Does my colleague now understand why the Harper economy flatlined for 10 years?

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Before the hon. member responds, I would like to remind the members that talking quietly is one thing, but if they are near the microphone used by the person speaking, they are much more audible.

I would ask that members respect one another.

Mr. Joël Godin: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Mississauga—Lakeshore for his question.

I have to say that we left the house in order. We left Canada with a budget surplus. That is important when we are talking about economic prosperity. I would like to remind my esteemed colleague that Canada was the first G7 country to emerge from the economic crisis.

Where is the Liberal Party's economic crisis? Why are there so many deficits? Why are they spending irresponsibly? It is going to be great fun when interest rates begin to rise and we are hit with an economic crisis. Where are the oxygen and the space for investing in our society to avoid an economic crisis? That is an important question.

We, the Conservatives, stood in the breach. We lived up to our commitments. I will say again that we are the only party in the country whose main priority is the economy.

● (1055)

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to return to something my colleague from Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier said. He was talking about Bill C-79 before us today, and he boasted about the economic merits of the trans-Pacific partnership.

Just so I understand, I would like to know what he thinks about the following. Right now, trade in Canada is lower than in the other member countries. If money leaves my pocket faster than it goes in, I am in a deficit situation.

I wanted to know whether he thinks that is a good economy and whether this is a good trade agreement.

Mr. Joël Godin: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Jonquière.

It is perfectly normal for the economy, markets and transactions with countries that we have not signed agreements with to be less strong. Signing an agreement lifts barriers, enabling us to conquer markets all around the world. They come here, and we go there. It is up to us to be creative, seize opportunities and make sure that our Canadian businesses are able to prosper in these regions.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): We will stop there and proceed to oral questions. The hon. member will have six minutes and six seconds remaining when we return to this matter.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

RAY MARTYNIUK

Mr. Joe Peschisolido (Steveston—Richmond East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the life Ray Martyniuk, a lifelong resident of Steveston. Ray loved his community and its history. He owned and operated several successful local businesses, including a health food store, Function Junction junk store, Cannery Cafe and Steveston Water Taxi.

Ray came by his entrepreneurial spirit naturally. His grandfather opened the town's first barber shop back in 1945 and his father started a dry cleaning business, which also served as the local post office. Ray's son Brett now operates Village Bikes in the same building where his great grandfather cut hair over 70 years ago.

Ray was affectionately known as Mr. Steveston. He will be missed.

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DOUG MONSMA

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, Doug Monsma, after a lengthy battle with brain cancer, went home to be with his heavenly father. Doug was well known in the Edmonton area as a teacher at Edmonton Christian School and he gave his energy and passion to the cause of Christian education.

Doug will be missed by his many family members, his friends, colleagues and not least, by all of his former students. In fact, Doug was one of my teachers and I will never forget his positive attitude and the kindness he showed to his students. He truly demonstrated the love of Jesus Christ.

When I remember Doug today, I am reminded of that verse from 2 Timothy. Doug has fought the good fight, has finished the race, has kept the faith. God bless Doug.

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AUTISM

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Scarborough—Rouge Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate SAAAC, the South Asian Autism Awareness Centre, located in Scarborough for its work in the past 10 years helping hundreds of young people on the autism spectrum and their families.

One out of 66 children born in Canada is on the spectrum. However, services to support these children are inadequate. SAAAC started in the basement of the house of its executive director, Geetha Moorthy, and has developed into the state-of-the-art facility it is today. The new centre came together due to her visionary leadership and the enormous support of retiring Toronto city councillor Glenn De Baeremaeker. Last month, I was proud to join our Prime Minister in opening the centre.

As we celebrate National Autism Awareness Month and Thanksgiving this weekend, I just want to say how thankful I am to have SAAAC in our community, for all of its volunteers, its staff, champions and a group of incredible parents who advocate and support their children.

To the young people who are served by SAAAC, I want to affirm that we will continue to support their reaching their full potential. I thank them for inspiring us.

* * *

● (1100)

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, people in Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke are astounded that the government intends to ram through the Trans Mountain pipeline at all costs, a pipeline that Kinder Morgan shareholders did not even want and that Vancouver Islanders certainly do not want. Thousands in my community have written letters, attended rallies, signed petitions and made their opposition to this pipeline clear. Just like them, I continue to stand resolutely against increased tanker traffic and the inevitable spills that would threaten the southern resident killer whales and our coastal environment and economy.

After being rebuffed by the courts, the government is claiming that it will restart its consultations with first nations. How can the Prime Minister promise meaningful consultations when he has already stated repeatedly that he is determined to see this pipeline built? Starting from the position that the pipeline is already a done deal is not consultation; it is railroading, and both first nations and my constituents see right through it.

It is high time that the Prime Minister cancels the Trans Mountain pipeline project, engages in genuine consultation with first nations and takes urgent action to meet the growing challenges of climate change.

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[*Translation*]

WORLD TEACHERS' DAY

Ms. Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is World Teachers' Day.

I want to commend all teachers for the stellar work they are doing. They have a positive influence on our children. They dedicate their lives to preparing the next generation. I admire them very much. It takes many qualities to excel at teaching, a profession that is getting more and more demanding. It takes patience, listening skills, intelligence, a sense of humour, perseverance and much more. It is absolutely vital to model perseverance for our children.

I have the good fortune and privilege of having a teacher for a mom. She is still in my life, encouraging me to do my very best. She still tells me that if something is worth doing, it is worth doing well. My mother passed on her love of teaching to my eldest daughter, who makes me very proud. In my family, I have aunts, cousins and a friend who are all teachers.

I hope my dear friends never forget that they are role models for our children. I salute them for their involvement with the next generation. I commend them from the bottom of my heart.

I also want to take this opportunity to wish everyone a happy Thanksgiving.

* * *

[*English*]

BOB SPIERS

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we approach municipal and regional elections in the North Okanagan Shuswap, this month there will be one name missing from the ballot in Vernon. Through three elections in 10 years, the name Bob Spiers was a popular choice of the voters in Vernon.

I had the pleasure of working with Mr. Spiers on a couple of issues that we took on in the interest our mutual constituents. One was the recognition of our RCMP auxiliary members, The other was the elimination of GST on the carbon tax. His dedication to issues that make a difference to his constituents is something that all elected representatives aspire to.

As we head into this Thanksgiving weekend, I would like to pay a special tribute to Mr. Bob Spiers who passed away shortly after attending a Vernon City Council meeting last summer, and to give thanks to all who put their names on a ballot and do a commendable job of representing their communities.

I wish a happy Thanksgiving to all.

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[*Translation*]

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF LA MAGDELEINE SECONDARY SCHOOL

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (La Prairie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, September 21 marked the 50th anniversary of La Magdeleine Secondary School in La Prairie. Founded in 1968, this school has seen generations of children grow up and generations of teachers come and go. As part of the celebrations, we were able to visit the school and attend the opening of the new running track and football field, where their team, La Milice, played a game.

Going to school is educational not just because it is where kids learn various subjects, but because it is where they learn everything. My brothers and I attended La Magdeleine when it opened a long time ago, and I have fond memories of that place. I remember being in the cafeteria listening to music by Quebec bands that were popular back then, such as Harmonium and Beau Dommage. The friendships we make at school last a lifetime.

I am sure that today's students no longer listen to Beau Dommage, but like my brothers and I, they will make irreplaceable memories of their time at La Magdeleine.

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● (1105)

ENTREPRENEURS IN VAUDREUIL—SOULANGES

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, small business owners are the innovators and entrepreneurs of our communities. In Vaudreuil—Soulanges, there are small innovative companies such as Cubix in Vaudreuil-Dorion, which organizes events of all sizes, Au Croissant 21 in Rigaud, which hires employees with various disabilities, and the Jorica family farm in Rigaud, which has invested in innovative dairy farming solutions.

[*English*]

We also have entrepreneurs who recently launched small businesses, like Jessika Ménard at le Cozy Café in Hudson and Carol Choquette of Motos cGc in St-Lazare. They are starting a journey that many have been on for decades, like the Quinn family of Quinn Farm in Notre-Dame-de-l'Île-Perrot, founded in 1982, and Arnaldo Vincenzi in Hudson who has run his own tailor shop for over 40 years. It is business owners like these and thousands more in Vaudreuil-Soulanges whose commitment and passion to our economy and our communities move them forward.

On behalf of this entire House, I thank them.

* * *

[*Translation*]

LABOUR SHORTAGE

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our regions our suffering from a major labour shortage. To help our businesses stay competitive, the people of Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier came together to find a solution, which is to form a foreign workers co-operative.

I have made several attempts to involve the offices of the ministers of immigration and labour, but a technicality has kept us from moving forward, and I received a rejection letter from the Minister of Labour. I have asked for a meeting so I could clarify our request to her, since the reasons outlined in her rejection letter were not valid. I want to explain that we are capable of following all the rules to the letter.

As parliamentarians, we have a duty to encourage our wealth creators to be active, involved and empowered. These leaders do not ask for any subsidies or financial aid. All they want is to keep growing their businesses, providing jobs for local residents and creating wealth.

Instead of getting in our SMEs' way, this Liberal government should be encouraging and supporting this kind of initiative.

* * *

[*English*]

FLU SEASON

Mr. Doug Eyolfson (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, flu season has arrived. While most people recover in a few days, influenza causes more than 12,000 hospitalizations every year and some groups are at a significant risk for influenza-related complications. Groups at high risk include pregnant women, persons with serious health conditions, those 65 years and older, and children below the age of five. If a person does get sick, he or she should remember to stay at home, get lots of rest and avoid contact with other people, except to get medical care.

Right now, an annual flu shot is the most effective way to help prevent the flu. That is why my constituency office will be hosting our third annual flu shot clinic on November 2. I encourage everyone in our community to come down to my office and receive their annual flu shot. It only takes a few minutes and it can help one save several days of lying in bed. Although I have been asked every time I have hosted our flu clinic, no, I will not be the one administering the shots.

* * *

SCIENCE

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Sudbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I am speaking in the House today about a young innovator from my riding of Sudbury. Brendon Matusch, a grade 11 student from Lo-Ellen Park Secondary School, won the top prize at the 2018 Canada-Wide Science Fair and the 2018 European science fair for young scientists where 135 young scientists from all over the world were competing. Brendon's project is entitled "Development of an Autonomous Vehicle Using Machine Learning". Not only did he win the best project award at the Canada science fair, Matusch won a gold medal, the platinum award for best intermediate project, the excellence award in the intermediate category, the challenge award – innovation in the intermediate category, and the youth can innovate award.

Brendon not only made Sudbury proud; he made the entire country proud. He is an inspiration to us all, to young innovators and all scientists. I hope he keeps up the great work.

* * *

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Bob Benzen (Calgary Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, resistance is growing to the Prime Minister's plan to risk our economy by having a federal carbon tax.

Manitoba is the latest province to say it will no longer tolerate the Liberals' intrusion into its policy-making and will focus on its made-in-Manitoba climate and green plan instead. Ontario premier Doug Ford is in Calgary today for a "Scrap the Carbon Tax" rally. He has been leading the charge against the tax by outing it as "the absolute worst tax for Canadian families, Canadian businesses, and the Canadian economy" and one that "does nothing for the environment". That message resonates in Alberta, where Jason Kenney will repeal the tax when he becomes premier.

Consensus is building across Canada for what Conservatives have said all along: that the Liberal carbon tax is nothing more than a cash grab to finance the Prime Minister's out-of-control spending, and that the Liberals must come clean on its real costs.

* * *

● (1110)

JOE KING MEMORIAL GIANT PUMPKIN FESTIVAL

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Millville, Cape Breton is a great place to raise a family and to grow crops. Through my life, my wife Pam and I had the great honour to farm in Millville with the late Joe King, his wife Catherine and their son Joey. This Thanksgiving weekend will be the annual Joe King Memorial Giant Pumpkin Festival, named in his honour and hosted by the Millville Community Centre.

Growers from across Cape Breton will bring their largest pumpkins to compete for this crown. There will be lots of entertainment for everyone. The community centre and ladies auxiliary will have activities for children, along with crafts and great food for all.

As we start our Thanksgiving weekend, we appreciate not only farmers of Cape Breton and those across the country for the food they produce; we also thank those who prepare the food for us. Let us thank the volunteers and donors who help our food banks and give those less fortunate than us something to eat.

On behalf of my colleagues in this House, I wish all across our wonderful country a happy Thanksgiving.

* * *

[*Translation*]

40TH EDITION OF THE BUCKWHEAT PANCAKE FESTIVAL

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to highlight the 40th edition of the Louiseville Buckwheat Pancake Festival, which runs from September 28 to October 7. More than 200,000 people are expected to visit the site and join the festivities, with music shows, children's activities, pancakes, of course, and the famous folkloric parade, which takes place this Sunday at 2:00 p.m.

Several interesting new events are part of the festival this year, including a demolition derby, a family square and a tour of the Jardins Ricard buckwheat mill. Also, baker Louise Savoie is presenting her creation, a special bread made with buckwheat flour and potatoes.

I would like to congratulate and thank the president of the festival, André Auger, as well as the honorary president, Jean-Pierre Gélinas, for their dedication to the festival. I also want to extend a special thank you to the volunteers who made the 40th Edition of the Buckwheat Pancake Festival a great success.

Congratulations to the milling queen and Miss Personality 2017-18, Mélissa Ladouceur, and good luck to all lady millers. Enjoy the Buckwheat Pancake Festival! I invite everyone to come and see us in Louiseville.

* * *

[*English*]

NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to stand today and congratulate the most recent recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize: Nadia Murad.

Captured by Islamic State militants at 21, Nadia was forced to endure three months as a sex slave. The militants killed anyone who refused to convert to Islam, including her mother and six of her brothers. She was bought and sold several times and regularly abused during her captivity. Being raped became part of a normal day for her. Incredibly, Nadia escaped, and this remarkable, strong and resilient young woman chose to fight on behalf of the Yazidi people and the thousands of women still suffering at the hands of the Islamic State.

She was awarded the Vaclav Havel Human Rights Prize by the Council of Europe in 2016 and the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought by the European Parliament. She was named the first UN goodwill ambassador for survivors of human trafficking.

Therefore, it is only fitting that Nadia won the Nobel Peace Prize and is the first Iraqi to do so. We commend her courage and her will to use her personal tragedy for the benefit of others.

* * *

[*Translation*]

FRÉDÉRIC TREMBLAY

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Louis-Hébert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I want to pay tribute to a phenomenal man from my riding, Frédéric Tremblay. Living with obsessive-compulsive disorder, Frédéric went through what would have been for him the long winter of his life with courage and resilience to come out bright-eyed with quiet strength.

Frédéric has now been telling his story for years, to remind people that help is out there and that there is always hope. This year, Frédéric was named one of the 2018 Faces of Mental Illness by the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health.

[*English*]

Throughout Mental Illness Awareness Week, Frédéric has been sharing his journey of living in recovery, and also serves as volunteer president of the Fondation Québécoise pour le Trouble Obsessionnel-Compulsif. In his role, Frédéric seeks to help people living with OCD cope with the disorder and lead a fulfilling life.

[*Translation*]

I want to thank Frédéric for his courage. He is an inspiration to me and to so many others in our community.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*English*]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one of the good things about having a drama teacher as prime minister is that it is very entertaining.

The Prime Minister has been acting like he is standing up to Donald Trump, when it reality, he has just backed down. He backed down from Donald Trump and agreed to impose higher drug prices on Canadian seniors, for higher profits for American drug companies. He backed down from Donald Trump, giving the U.S. President a veto over Canadian trade deals with other foreign countries. He backed down from Donald Trump and imposed Canadian export controls on our dairy products.

When will the Prime Minister stop backing down and start standing up for our country?

● (1115)

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Canada-U.S. Relations), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government got a good deal.

Let me explain something. The Conservative post-battle courage is ironic, given that last year, Stephen Harper and the Conservatives were imploring us to capitulate and accept any deal at any price. Let me quote from Harper's memo, "it does not matter whether current American proposals are worse than what we have now."

Over and over, the Conservatives urged us to take Harper's advice. That was not our approach, and we got a good deal.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in that very memo, Stephen Harper predicted that the government would capitulate. It turns out Stephen Harper was absolutely right about that.

It capitulated and imposed higher drug prices on Canadian seniors so Donald Trump's corporations could make higher profits. It capitulated, giving Trump a veto power over Canadian trade deals with other countries. It capitulated and imposed Canadian penalties on Canadian dairy products being exported abroad. Meanwhile, the government did not get any relief for the U.S. protectionism on Canadian products.

When will the government finally stop backing down from Donald Trump?

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Canada-U.S. Relations), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we got a good deal, unlike the Conservatives' recommendations in times gone by.

This deal improves on the initial NAFTA in the following ways. We removed the investor-state dispute system that allowed companies to sue Canada for hundreds of millions of dollars. We got rid of the energy ratchet clause, which restricted the Canadian government from access to our energy resources, and this is good news for our oil patch workers. The new auto rules of origin are great news for Canadian workers. We also have much stronger labour and environmental chapters, and we protected chapter 19.

This is a good deal.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, getting rid of the investor-state provision was actually a demand of Donald Trump's. The Liberals actually support investor-state protections. They put them in the CPTPP and in CETA. So to now take credit for a capitulation they made in favour of Trump is laughable.

As for this ratchet clause, the Liberals were trying to flip through the deal to find something they had won on. It turns out this ratchet clause has never been used in 30 years, just to show how irrelevant this so-called victory was.

The Liberals got nothing on steel tariffs, nothing on softwood tariffs and nothing on buy America. Why did they get so little—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Canada-U.S. Relations), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me continue with the list of successes in the renegotiated NAFTA.

This agreement is a massive step forward for progressive trade. We, for example, have the strongest labour chapter of any trade agreement to which Canada is party. In fact, the enforceable provisions that protect women's rights, minority rights, indigenous rights and environmental protections are the strongest in any Canadian trade agreement to date.

As National Chief Perry Bellegarde of the Assembly of First Nations recently said, "The provisions addressing Indigenous Peoples in the USMCA make it the most inclusive international trade agreement for Indigenous peoples to date."

This is a good deal.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government says that it has negotiated a good agreement. The Liberals are celebrating the United States—Mexico—Canada Agreement. My definition of negotiating is giving things and taking things in return. They gave away access to the dairy market. They gave in to the United States by leaving the surtax on steel, aluminum and softwood lumber in place. They agreed to costlier drugs. They put quotas on the auto industry. Furthermore, we will have to ask President Trump for permission if we want to enter into trade agreements with other countries. They call that a good agreement.

Where are the wins?

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Canada-U.S. Relations), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is a good step for Canada.

The most important thing is that Canada has maintained its access to the American market, and we have done away with the dispute settlement system that allowed companies to sue Canada for hundreds of millions of dollars. That is no more.

We got rid of the clause that prevented our government from controlling access to our resources. The new auto sector rules will protect our workers in this industry. We have strong chapters on labour and the environment. We have protected chapter 19.

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, how can this Liberal government crow about the United States-Mexico-Canada agreement when Canada is included as an afterthought? The negotiations are not over, because the surtax Canada imposed on products to put pressure on the United States during the talks is still in place today.

In Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, for example, Biscuits Leclerc, which has factories in Canada and the U.S., has to pay a surtax, as I mentioned, to import its own products into its own country.

When will the government lift these taxes so that consumers can stop having to pay so much for products?

● (1120)

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Canada-U.S. Relations), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is fascinating to watch the Conservatives find their backbone again, especially given that last year, as my colleague is well aware, Stephen Harper and the Conservatives begged us to give in and accept any deal, no matter what it cost Canadians. Thanks to our patience, our negotiating skills, and our first-rate team, we secured a great deal for Canada.

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Prime Minister met with Canadian and Quebec dairy farmers to really take stock of the cracks opened up by the United States—Mexico—Canada Agreement. He acknowledged that farmers will suffer a bit. The reality is that farmers will suffer a lot when they lose a month's wages. This is huge and completely unacceptable.

My question is very simple: how does the Liberal government manage to be so bad at listening to the Quebec dairy industry?

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that our farmers produce food of the highest quality for Canadians at a reasonable price and that they support the prosperity of our rural areas. We appreciate that there will be impacts on our farmers, and we are committed to providing them with fair and full compensation to help them succeed.

We will quickly establish a working group with farmers and the industry to help the process move forward. The Prime Minister, the minister and I met with many supply-managed farmers this week.

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Liberals do not listen to Quebec producers. Family farms are at risk, and the next generation of farmers is worried because with this agreement Liberals opened another breach in the supply management system.

Supply management was already weakened by breaches in CETA. The Liberals once again used agricultural producers as bargaining chips. When Liberals abandon supply management, they abandon middle-class families and the next generation of farmers.

My question is very simple: do they realize this?

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we defended our supply management system against the Americans' aggressive attempts at dismantling it. Market access is similar to what the Conservatives had negotiated in the TPP.

We are the party that implemented supply management, and we are the government that intends to defend it. That is precisely what we have done. We made a commitment to fairly and equitably compensate producers.

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[*English*]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the Trans Mountain pipeline fiasco, the Liberals keep repeating the words "meaningful consultation", but clearly have no idea what it actually means.

How can it be meaningful when the Prime Minister slams his fist on the table again and again, saying "this pipeline must be built"? How can it be meaningful when the Liberals bought the 65-year-old pipeline, essentially making themselves both judge and jury?

It is said that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. How long is it going to be until the Liberals simply dump their failed strategy and actually begin to respect indigenous rights and title?

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on indigenous consultations, we have a clear path forward provided to us by the Federal Court of Appeal. That includes three concrete steps.

First, we will not appeal the court's decision. Second, we will re-engage phase three consultations with all indigenous groups impacted and ensure that indigenous voices are at the table so we can have a meaningful dialogue, which is a two-way dialogue. We will not only listen, we will exchange and seek to accommodate where possible. Third, we have appointed the Hon. Frank Iacobucci as federal adviser to oversee the consultation process.

We believe it is worth taking the time to get it right, together.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week I had the honour to attend the memorial for Chief Wah Tah K'eght, Henry Alfred, of northern British Columbia. He was the last living Wet'suwet'en chief who argued the Delgamuukw case all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada. He stood on the stand hour after hour while government lawyers tried to break down his understanding and knowledge of his territory, and he won. He won establishing rights and title and the ability of indigenous peoples to stand in the country for those sacred rights.

How exactly are the Liberals honouring Chief Wah Tah K'eght's memory and all the indigenous communities and leaders who have fought for that principle, generation after generation?

● (1125)

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for far too long indigenous people have fought to have their rights recognized and implemented. As a government, we are committed to doing things differently.

While we set a high bar to begin with for TMX consultations, we understand that we can and must do better. That is why we will not appeal the court's decision. We share the court's view on moving forward by engaging in meaningful and focused consultations with indigenous groups. That is exactly what we intend to do.

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INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the government said that chapter 32, which requires us to get Washington's permission to negotiate free trade with certain countries, was not a big deal because, "any party to NAFTA is allowed...to leave with six months' notice." That is ridiculous.

The government knows full well that Canada is not going to quit a trade deal on which one in five Canadian jobs depend. Effectively, the government has given up our independence in setting trade policy for Asia-Pacific. Yes, the government got a deal, but at what cost?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of International Trade Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am trying to understand the Conservatives' position on China. On Monday, they told us that we were way too close. On Tuesday, they said that we were not close enough.

However, we probably can agree on one thing; that a $40 billion investment that will send clean Canadian LNG to Asia is good for us, it is good for the planet, and we do not have to ask anybody for permission.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is not about any one party's position on free trade with China; it is about our sovereignty to negotiate those kinds of deals.

The Liberals also sold us out on our exchange rate policy, on our central bank policy. As Greece has found out, if we do not control our central bank, we do not have a sovereign state. If Washington does not like our exchange rate, chapter 33 forces us into consultations to arrive at a mutually acceptable resolution.

The Liberals were so desperate to get a deal, any deal, they sold Canada out on our central bank policy. Again, yes, they got a deal, but at what price?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of International Trade Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada gave up none of its sovereignty in this deal. We have the capacity to enter into agreements with any country in the world when we believe it is in Canada's interest. By the way, these provisions apply to all three countries that were party to the negotiation. It is very hard to predict what one country or another may feel two, six or eight years from now. However, one thing we know for sure: Canada is free to enter into negotiations with any country that it chooses.

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CARBON PRICING

Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with Manitoba coming out strongly against the Liberal government's carbon tax this week, the Prime Minister's signature initiative now has the support of just two provincial governments.

I asked the environment minister a clear question yesterday, and today I hope for an actual answer. There seems to be a clear consensus among experts on all sides of the issue that the government will not come close to meeting its international climate change commitments. Could the minister confirm that the government is in fact not on track to meet its Paris agreement targets?

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect, the government was elected on a commitment to grow the economy and protect the environment at the same time. We are moving forward with a plan to protect the environment that includes a price on pollution. It is disappointing that Manitoba will not take threats posed to the environment seriously.

With respect to the question on the Paris agreement, we are confident that we can reach the Paris agreement without question. We are moving forward with plans that include not just a price on pollution, but advancements in public transit, investments in clean technology and an oceans protection plan as well.

Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that the parliamentary secretary answers a question that the minister refused to answer yesterday.

Given that support for the carbon tax, which forms the backbone of the Liberals' climate plan, is literally disintegrating around it and given that even in the best case scenario there are huge gaps between emissions projections and the Paris targets, how many billions of Canadian taxpayer dollars is the government projecting will have to be spent on overseas carbon credits in order to make up for the Liberals' climate plan shortfalls?

● (1130)

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect, the question grossly mis-characterized what is happening across Canada. The plan we put in place specifically invites the provinces and territories to come up with a plan. When they fail to take steps responsibly that will actually meet the targets we have set across Canada, we will implement a federal backstop to ensure that Canadians, no matter which province they live in, benefit from a healthy environment. The great thing about our plan is that it is simple. It puts a price on pollution. It is going to make life more affordable for Canadians and more expensive for polluters.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the carbon tax considerably increases the cost of living for Canadians. The cost of manufacturing and shipping is higher for everything people buy. Fortunately, several provinces are pulling out of this tax, which is unfair for Canadians, especially for low-income families. We know very well that this tax is used to pay the huge debt the Liberals have created.

Instead of misleading Canadians by saying it will give us back that money, will the government commit immediately to abolishing this tax so that Canadian taxpayers have more money in their pockets?

[*English*]

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, the hon. member completely mis-characterized what is going on. If he does not believe me, I invite him to read the report of Mark Cameron. Even Stephen Harper's former director of policy has indicated that this government's plan is going to put more money into the pockets of Canadian families and at the same time lead to a reduction in emissions. It is disappointing in the extreme that the hon. member will take money from his constituents to make pollution free again.

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to remind everyone it was Saskatchewan that was the first province to stand up to the Liberal government and oppose what Premier Moe calls the "destructive, made-in-Ottawa carbon tax". Now Saskatchewan is joined by Ontario, PEI, Manitoba and Alberta, and there will be more. In Saskatoon yesterday, the premiers, Moe and Ford, met and declared a strong united front against this worst tax ever. Canadians cannot afford another Liberal tax.

When will the Liberals respect the provinces and end this carbon tax?

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect, we now know that the Conservatives have no plan. Their leader has no plan. They will not even commit to meeting the Paris targets. This is because Conservatives are focused on—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for Saskatoon—Grasswood asked a very good question, and I am waiting for the answer. I am sure he is too, so I would ask honourable members to maybe not chatter as much so that we can hear that answer.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Sean Fraser: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, it seems that the Conservatives' only plan to tackle climate change is to keep pollution free again. While they are scratching out some make-believe plan on the back of a napkin, we are actually moving forward with measures that will reduce emissions and keep life more affordable for Canadians. We are investing in public transit, we are investing in clean technology, we are putting a price on pollution, and this is what Canadians deserve.

* * *

[*Translation*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, trying to get a seat on the Security Council is commendable, but the government's strategy simply does not cut it. Canada lags far behind other OECD countries in funding development assistance. The Liberals are also failing to do enough to fight climate change or to promote world peace, particularly in the Middle East. Our allies are disappointed, and Canada's reputation, unfortunately, is not improving.

Do the Liberals realize that simply saying that Canada is back is not enough and that action is needed?

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Canada-U.S. Relations), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in short, our accomplishments are as follows: we have worked with North Korea and shown leadership on this critical issue by hosting a meeting with 20 countries in Vancouver. On Venezuela, we are an important member of the Lima Group. As for peace operations, Canada will deploy an air task force to the United Nations Mission in Mali; it is really doing a great job. Regarding Myanmar, we have responded to the crisis by providing more than $300 million. We have made other exemplary accomplishments to ensure that those responsible are—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for Jonquière.

* * *

COPYRIGHT

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in renegotiating NAFTA, Canada knuckled under to Donald Trump's demand to extend copyrights from 50 to 70 years after the death of the author. A citizen from Saguenay, Mr. Jean-Marie Tremblay, has been assembling a collection of more than 7,000 works over the past 25 years. The change in copyright law will have a major impact on these essential works for our students.

Is the government aware that letting Donald Trump rewrite our laws could adversely impact our education system?

● (1135)

[*English*]

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been very clear when it comes to copyright and intellectual property that we have a very comprehensive plan. That is why we introduced the innovation and skills plan, and part of that plan is an $85.3-million commitment to the first national IP strategy. The objective of the strategy is to make sure that we help people generate more IP and that they get more IP benefits. With regard to copyright, this is going to help artists. This is going to help creators. This is going to help the industry grow. This is good for Canada, and this is good for our economy.

* * *

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, every day the Liberals fail to get our oil to new markets it costs Canadians $50 million in lost revenue because of deep discounts to our American consumers. Continued delays on the Trans Mountain expansion mean Canadian jobs are at stake. The Liberals must immediately appeal the Federal Court decision and request a leave so construction can continue.

Why do the Liberals not recognize that they can consult and appeal at the same time, or are they just purposely stalling this project?

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was interesting to hear in the House today the NDP saying that we should not even engage with first nations and should abandon the project, and now we are hearing the Conservatives saying that we are not going fast enough and to disregard the courts completely.

We will take no lessons from the Conservatives, who cut corners at every turn. They disregarded environmental concerns, and they also think that consulting with indigenous peoples is a suggestion and not a constitutional obligation.

The Conservatives did not build a single kilometre of pipeline to overseas markets. The Leader of the Opposition is doubling down. It is déjà vu all over again. It is clear that the Conservatives have learned nothing from their decade of failure on major projects.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if the Prime Minister were serious about ensuring that Trans Mountain moves ahead, he would be doing everything possible to make it happen. He should have begun consultations and appealed the court decision immediately.

Why is the Prime Minister incapable of consulting and appealing at the same time?

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, actually, the message that would send to the indigenous community is that we do not want to consult, and basically, we do not want to see the pipeline move forward. At the end of the day, we will take no lessons from the Conservatives, who have no credibility on this file, with their disregarding indigenous consultations and disregarding the environment.

We will take the time to get this right and meaningfully engage with first nations along the corridor of the project to make sure that we get this right.

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals' so-called plan to get Trans Mountain built will not get shovels in the ground for years. The Minister of Natural Resources came to my riding this summer and turned some sod, and that photo-op is the extent of their progress on this file.

The project was the most highly consulted in Canadian history, but the Liberals are starting from scratch. Their plan failed. When will the Liberals start using all the tools at their disposal and get this pipeline built?

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to be very clear, we are not starting over. There has already been a lot of work that has been done. We are building on the relationships we have, the information that has been gathered and the consultations done to date.

We know that it will take more time to meaningfully engage with first nations with meaningful dialogue on a nation-to-nation basis to make sure that we get this right. We are respecting the judgment of the Federal Court of Appeal, and we intend to make sure that we have specific and focused dialogue with the first nations along the project corridor.

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we know the Prime Minister and his Ottawa Liberals could not care less about Alberta or about Albertans. While Albertans are struggling to find work, and people are losing their jobs, their homes and their businesses, the Liberals continue to sit on their hands and do absolutely nothing. They bungled the Trans Mountain expansion that would have created thousands of good-paying jobs due to Liberal incompetence. Our oil and gas workers are left with nothing.

Why have the Liberals so failed Albertans?

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is quite the opposite. We are supporting the workers all across Canada to make sure that major projects get the licence they need to move forward, but we need to do so in the right way and respect the courts, respect indigenous communities and respect the environment, something that is completely foreign to the Conservatives. We will take no lessons from them.

Oral Questions

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on average, more than one member of the Canadian Forces dies by suicide each month. Unfortunately, serving members often struggle to get the help they need, with one barrier being that self-harm is still a disciplinary offence under the military code of conduct. This policy is archaic and does nothing but keep the men and women serving our country who face mental health challenges from seeking help.

Will the minister support the NDP amendment to Bill C-77 to remove self-harm as a disciplinary offence and help serving members get the help they need and deserve?

● (1140)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question and his excellent work on the committee.

As we all know, our government is committed to strengthening victims' rights in the military justice system.

That is what we are doing with Bill C-77, which adds a declaration of victims rights to the Code of Service Discipline.

Bill C-77 ensures that victims rights are upheld and allows the victims to have the help of a liaison officer to navigate in the military justice system.

[*English*]

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, nearly two years ago, the defence committee recommended that service records of those kicked out of the military for being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender be revised to honourable discharges, and nothing happened.

Nearly a year ago, the Liberal government issued a formal apology to those women and men, and nothing happened.

When will the Minister of National Defence put in place a process to revise the service records of these former members of the Canadian Forces who are still waiting for their honourable service to be acknowledged?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with our new defence policy, we are putting men and women first. We will invest significantly in that defence policy while making sure that our men and women have the capacity and equipment they need and that their rights are upheld in the Canadian Armed Forces. We have dedicated ourselves to the men and women of the armed forces, and that is what we will continue doing in the years ahead.

* * *

[*English*]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Mr. Kyle Peterson (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in my riding of Newmarket—Aurora, like all of us, there are a number of successful women entrepreneurs. However, we know that women entrepreneurs face unique barriers and challenges. Fewer than 16% of SMEs are majority women-owned in Canada. Only 8.4% of women-owned businesses export, compared to almost 13% of men-owned. Women who own businesses have a much more difficult time accessing capital.

Could the Minister of Small Business and Export Promotion update the House on what she is doing to help support women entrepreneurs and to build a more inclusive and strong economy?

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of Small Business and Export Promotion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the full and equal participation of women in the economy is essential to Canada's competitiveness. That is why, last week, I announced the women entrepreneurship ecosystem fund. It is an up to $85-million fund that will strengthen and help women entrepreneurs succeed. This program will close gaps. It will make it easier for people to find the mentorship they need. It will help organizations better respond to the needs of women entrepreneurs and will produce the kinds of initiatives they have been asking for.

According to the Mackenzie Institute, addressing women's empowerment has the potential of adding $150 billion to the Canadian economy.

* * *

[*Translation*]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, dairy producers in my region are concerned about the free trade agreement that was reached with the United States and Mexico. They are upset with the attitude of the Prime Minister, who not only opened up our market to American products and eliminated class 7, but also put a cap on Canadian exports. That defies reason. As we have learned with the trans-Pacific partnership, the government cannot be trusted to offer fair compensation.

When will the Prime Minister finally start respecting dairy farmers and when will the details of the compensation package be announced?

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we defended our supply management system against the Americans' aggressive attempts at dismantling it. Market access is similar to what the Conservatives had negotiated in the TPP.

We are the party that implemented supply management, and we are the government that intends to defend it. That is precisely what we have done. We made a commitment to compensate producers in a fair and effective manner.

[*English*]

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, Global News reported that Veterans Affairs has absolutely no idea how many family members receive benefits. Canadians are already appalled that the minister refuses to end funding for the murderer of officer Catherine Campbell.

Could the minister assure Canadians that no other murderers, like Chris Garnier, are receiving benefits that are intended for veterans?

● (1145)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our priority is to provide veterans and their families with the benefits and support they need. These benefits apply to 129,143 veterans with service-related illnesses or injuries. Last year, 1,400 veterans received benefits and, to the extent that it helped their recovery, services for their families. We also know that our investments in financial security, career transition, training and hiring new staff will ensure that veterans and their families receive the best services.

[*English*]

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this week Veterans Affairs confirmed that they have no idea what services are provided for veterans families and the number of people who are using them. It is the Liberals' responsibility to track those numbers and to ensure that those receiving services are deserving of them, unlike Chris Garnier, who still is receiving taxpayer-funded therapy for PTSD caused by his murder of Officer Catherine Campbell.

Can the minister assure us that there are no other inmates receiving benefits intended for veterans? Can you answer the question, please?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I am sure the hon. member does not want me to answer the question. I will just defer to the hon. parliamentary secretary.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we said earlier in our first answer, we have figures, and they are simple.

Last year, 1,400 veterans received services. We will continue to deliver them. Our priority is to provide benefits to veterans and their families. Last year, 1,400 veterans out of 129,143 ill veterans received them. We are there to meet their needs.

Veterans remain the focus of the services we deliver. Any determination regarding the services available to the family members of veterans is made in consultation with case managers. This will continue to be the case.

[*English*]

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, to be clear, we are not talking about benefits for veterans and their families. We are talking about benefits for the adult children of veterans. Veterans who are injured serving Canada have to pay for the counselling of their adult children because of the effects of those injuries on them. Chris Garnier is an adult child of a veteran, yet he is in prison for murder and receiving benefits.

Now the minister says he has no idea how many family members of veterans are receiving benefits from his department. Can the minister assure us that no other adult children or prison inmates are receiving benefits that are intended for veterans?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our colleagues opposite are telling us that we do not have any figures, but we do.

As I mentioned earlier, nearly 1,400 veterans received this service through all agencies. We work tirelessly to provide veterans and their families with the care that they need.

Unlike the Conservatives, we believe that when veterans serve their country, their whole family serves with them. Veterans remain the focus of the services we deliver.

For any determination regarding the services delivered to members, we will be there. We know that this was the case for about 1,400 veterans last year.

I am not sure that the intention of the members opposite is to say that it is a bad thing to—

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The member for Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River.

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HEALTH

Ms. Georgina Jolibois (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this year the Liberals have cut funding for HIV and AIDs treatments in northern Saskatchewan, despite the record high number of cases in the province. Nurses and health professionals have called on the government to take urgent action. After meeting with Elton John, the Prime Minister said he is committed to creating an AIDS-free future.

Now that he has heard from health professionals and a Grammy winner, will the Prime Minister restore funding immediately to Saskatchewan HIV/AIDS organizations, yes or no?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is deeply committed to addressing HIV and AIDs in Canada and we are proud to have increased spending in this area following the cuts by the Harper government.

This year, our government is investing $87 million across the country to tackle HIV and other sexually transmitted blood-borne diseases in Canada. We are also providing funding of $30 million under the new harm reduction fund to prevent and control HIV and hepatitis C among people who share drug equipment.

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PENSIONS

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): The Minister of Seniors seems to prefer avoiding questions about pension protection for Canadian workers and retirees. Hard-working Canadians deserve answers from the government.

When the minister was appointed, her mandate clearly stated that she was to conduct hearings and to protect workers' pensions. Canadian workers have heard nothing since. Why is she refusing to listen to Canadian workers and retirees? Will the minister take action on changing Canada's bankruptcy and insolvency laws, yes or no?

● (1150)

Hon. Filomena Tassi (Minister of Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity on World Teachers' Day to acknowledge the contribution of our teachers and thank them. We know that their efforts go well beyond the classroom.

In response to the member's question, we as a government take pension security very seriously. That is why we increased the CPP, something that has not been done in 20 years.

Further, with respect to his question, we know that this is a decades-old problem. Our government is committed to getting the right solution, which is why in our 2018 budget we have committed to consulting with stakeholders. In my mandate letter it is also a commitment that we made.

We are not looking for any solution. We are looking for the right solution.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Niagara Falls, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday we found out that the Russian military has engaged in a number of serious cyber-attacks. Not surprisingly, the World Anti-Doping Agency and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons were targeted. These attacks were designed by the Russians to disrupt investigations into Russia's numerous violations of international law, in particular, the nerve attack in the United Kingdom.

I would like to ask the Minister of Foreign Affairs what specific action is she going to take in response to these Russian attacks on Canada, and will she introduce new sanctions and expel members of the Russian diplomatic corps from Canada?

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Canada-U.S. Relations), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday we joined our allies in exposing malicious cyber operations by the Russian military, specifically the GRU. These acts form part of a broader pattern of activities by the Russian government that flout international norms, demonstrate a disregard for international law and undermine the rules-based international order. We call on all of those who value this order to come together in its defence.

Our position towards Russia remains clear and strong. We will always stand up to these cyber-threats and we will never let Russia threaten Canadian stability or security.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one of the only Canadian firearms manufacturers has stalled production, pending confirmation of the firearms marking regulation set to come into force December 1. Twenty-five thousand people are employed by 4,500 firearms businesses in Canada and they just want to get on with their business.

Will the minister advise us when the government will announce another 11th hour deferral or if this poorly drafted regulation will come into force on December 1? Distributors, dealers and manufacturers need some clarity so they can get on with their business.

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we share Canadians' serious concerns about gun violence and will be working hard to address the problem. We have a very comprehensive review being done by Minister Blair at the present time. We will enhance background checks and will be removing the five-year limitation, allowing any history of violence, including mental illness associated with violence, to be considered when someone applies for a licence. This is a good step in the right direction.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I want to remind hon. members that when they are referring to someone else in the chamber, they should refer to them by their ridings or titles, not by their names.

The hon. member for Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner.

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is clear from the parliamentary secretary's response that the Liberals do not understand the question and are certainly failing on another issue.

Thousands of small businesses need clarity today on whether the government is going to move ahead with this poorly drafted regulation, or if common sense will prevail and a deferral will be issued and a new regulation drafted. Will the minister do his job, meet with industry so it can provide its expertise on firearms markings, and fix this flawed regulation to avoid further negative impacts on Canadian businesses?

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have legislation that is currently going through Parliament that addresses some gaps and weaknesses dealing with legal weapons. We have enhanced background checks, ensuring that sellers will verify, ensuring that vendors keep records of sales to allow for tracking. We are going in the right direction and we will move forward.

* * *

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during Women's History Month, we celebrate women who make an impact. One way to make a significant impact is to help young women across Canada reach their leadership goals. We all remember last year when this place was filled with young women from coast to coast to coast in the first ever Daughters of the Vote program.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Status of Women tell the House how our government is supporting the next generation of women leaders in Canada?

● (1155)

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Don Valley East for her tireless advocacy.

Promoting gender equality is not only the right thing to do, but the smart thing to do for our economy and the middle class. However, we need governments with more women representation if gender equality is to be truly achieved. That is why this week the Minister of Status of Women announced that we are investing $3.8 million to further the great work of the Daughters of the Vote program.

Our government is proud to support this important project that empowers young women to seek public office and helps build a more representative democracy for everyone.

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JUSTICE

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Constable Sarah Beckett paid the ultimate sacrifice when she was killed in the line of duty by an impaired driver.

This week her husband, Brad Aschenbrenner, spoke out against Bill C-75, which waters down sentences for impaired driving causing bodily harm.

Will the Liberals listen to Sarah's husband and other victims, and remove from Bill C-75 the watering down of sentences for this serious crime?

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, without question, our hearts go out to the family of Constable Beckett in this tragedy.

I will say that our government is incredibly proud to have introduced and passed legislation that is among the toughest impaired driving laws in the world. I will say, with respect to Bill C-75, that it does not in any way, shape or form change the principles of sentencing, which are proportionate to the gravity of the offence and the grave responsibility of the offender.

What Bill C-75 does is that it gives prosecutors the necessary discretion to determine—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for West Nova.

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NATIONAL PARKS

Mr. Colin Fraser (West Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada's century old national park system is unlike any other in the world, yet in 2014 the Conservative government cut funding to parks by over $29 million.

My favourite national park, Kejimkujik, is in my riding of West Nova. This beautiful park was once used for year-round hiking, camping and skiing. Can the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change tell me and my constituents what is being done to improve our national parks and ensure year-round access?

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for West Nova for his continued work in ensuring that Canadians get to enjoy Kejimkujik and other national parks all year round.

Unlike the Harper Conservatives, our government is ensuring meaningful experiences in parks across the country. To do this, we have made park entry for youth free forever, and made substantial investments in programs and experiences to ensure that more Canadians have access to nature and historic sites.

In Kejimkujik National Park, this means that there is $4 million in upgrades to Jeremy's Bay Campground. I look forward to working with the member to ensure that we can enhance year-round access to our national park system, including at Kejimkujik.

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[*Translation*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Alupa Clarke (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in 2015, our Conservative government gave its support to the Beauport 2020 project, which seeks to further develop the Port of Québec. Sixty million dollars were earmarked for the project. This support was contingent on the project clearing public consultations and a Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency assessment.

Once these legal hurdles have been cleared, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, along with cabinet, will have to decide whether to give the project the green light.

Is the government expecting to reach a decision soon? Can it give us specific time frames?

[*English*]

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are familiar with the project and understand there has been some developments as recently as April.

The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency is conducting the environmental assessment of this project under the CEAA 2012 rules.

Our government understands the importance of timely decisions while ensuring that those decisions are based on science, facts, the traditional knowledge of indigenous people, input from the public and, of course, evidence. I am certain that the agency will work in collaboration with the minister to make a recommendation, and a responsible decision will be taken in due course.

* * *

[*Translation*]

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Transport dodged my question about a possible public inquiry into the Lac-Mégantic tragedy by claiming that the people of Lac-Mégantic were not interested.

The very same day, however, the Coalition des citoyens et organismes engagés pour la sécurité ferroviaire de Lac-Mégantic was on the Hill calling for that very commission of inquiry.

The minister is correct when he says the people of Lac-Mégantic do not want to relive the events of five years ago. They want to prevent such a tragedy from happening again.

Will the minister listen to the people of Lac-Mégantic and order a truly independent public inquiry?

● (1200)

[*English*]

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think we can all agree that no person, certainly no family, should have to go through what the people of Lac-Mégantic have gone through.

That is why the minister has made rail transportation his number one priority. We have investigated this issue thoroughly and taken unprecedented action. We are working with the communities of Lac-Mégantic, Frontenac, and Nantes to ensure that the rail bypass goes forward.

We will continue to take action to rebuild this beautiful community.

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[*Translation*]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the people of Lac-Mégantic want an inquiry. Will the government give them one?

When the agreement with Europe was signed, the government promised to compensate the provinces for the increase in drug costs and the impact on health care costs. It was even included in the mandate letter for the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Three years later, there is nothing, not even a hint of a program.

Now the government is simply adding to this with the new NAFTA, which raises the cost of drugs a second time, again without compensation.

When will the government keep its promise and compensate Quebec for the agreements it signs?

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Canada-U.S. Relations), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know how proud Canadians are of our public health care system. We will continue to work with the provinces, territories and our partners to reduce drug costs and provide timely access to drugs. This is a very important issue for our government. We look forward to attracting new medical research to Canada. Our government will always defend our public health care system.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I take it there is no compensation, then. It is disappointing, but that is always how it goes with Ottawa. The government promises to compensate the losers in the agreement, but it forgets all about them as soon as it is done signing.

The same thing happened with the Canada-U.S. free trade agreement, the North American Free Trade Agreement, the free trade agreement between Canada and the EFTA and the Canada-Korea Free Trade Agreement. Now, we have the agreement between Canada and Europe, the new trans-Pacific partnership and the new NAFTA, in which our producers have been sacrificed. We have been through this before.

When will the government finally come up with a plan that fully compensates dairy producers for the last three agreements, which it signed at their expense?

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Canada-U.S. Relations), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is taking action to bring down the cost of prescription drugs for Canadians. We are working with the provinces and territories to make prescription drugs more affordable. We have joined the pan-Canadian Pharmaceutical Alliance, which has helped Canadians save over $2 billion annually. We are investing more than $140 million to improve access to health care and support innovation in that area.

* * *

[*English*]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, CCF): Mr. Speaker, this morning, Statistics Canada reported that our country has lost 24,000 manufacturing jobs over the past year. Among the factors depressing Canadian manufacturing employment are American tariffs on our steel and aluminum exports. The new free trade deal with the U.S. should have ensured tariff-free access to the U.S. market.

Does the government have a plan and a timeline to remove American tariffs from Canadian metal?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite should understand that our government fully supports steel and aluminum workers. That is why we provided a $2-billion support package to address the concerns specifically in the steel and aluminum sector. This $2-billion support package will help small and medium-sized businesses by providing them with additional financing through BDC and export financing through EDC. We are very confident that this plan in the short term will help them and we will continue to engage our American counterparts to find resolution on section 232 regarding steel and aluminum.

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[*Translation*]

SUPPLY MANAGEMENT

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I believe that if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

> That the House call on the government to implement a program that provides financial compensation to egg, poultry and dairy farmers for all the losses they sustain due to the breaches to the supply management system in CETA, the CPTPP and the USMCA, and that it do so before asking parliamentarians to vote on the USMCA.

● (1205)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Canada-U.S. Relations), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the following three treaties:

[*English*]

"Agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of the Republic of Kosovo for the Promotion and Protection of Investments", done at Toronto, March 6, 2018;

[*Translation*]

"Agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of the Republic of Moldova for the Promotion and Protection of Investments", done at Ottawa, June 12, 2018;

Routine Proceedings

[*English*]

"Agreement between the Government of Canada and the International Bureau of the World Intellectual Property Organization, in relation to the functioning of the Canadian Commissioner of Patents as an International Searching Authority and International Preliminary Examining Authority under the Patent Cooperation Treaty", done at Geneva on September 28, 2018.

* * *

PETITIONS

BIRTH TOURISM

Mr. Joe Peschisolido (Steveston—Richmond East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I present this e-petition, e-1527, calling on the government to address birth tourism. Birth tourism exploits our generous public health care and social security systems and violates Canadians' sense of fairness. Nearly 11,000 Canadians signed this e-petition, calling on the government to condemn birth tourism, quantify the practice and implement concrete measures reducing and eliminating this illegitimate and exploitative industry.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have an electronic petition, e-petition 1601, which is signed by some 12,082 Canadians, representing indigenous communities, indigenous leaders and residents of British Columbia, calling for the government to finally make good on its promise to put in place a moratorium on oil tanker traffic along the north coast of British Columbia. This was a bill I introduced some parliaments ago. It has been a 50-year debate. These 12,082 residents are joining the chorus of many other British Columbia residents who are calling for protections of what must be protected. We know the threats still exist. The government has long promised legislation, and we await to see its passage through the Senate.

[*Translation*]

REVITALIZATION OF THE OLD PORT OF MONTREAL

Mr. Marc Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of some of my constituents, it is my honour to present to the House a petition about the plan for the revitalization of the Old Port of Montreal.

* * *

[*English*]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

PRIVILEGE

FAIR REPRESENTATION DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to raise a question of privilege about your decision not to grant an additional question per week to the group of independent members.

After the 2015 election, you gave the 11 members from non-recognized parties in the House of Commons, meaning the 10 Bloc Québécois members and the one Green Party member, 11 questions to ask during question period.

Even after three more members joined our group, you maintained the same number of questions, stating that each member could ask one question a week. Two of the members were former Liberals, and one was a former New Democrat. This meant each of the 14 members got to ask one question a week, which kept things fair with regard to the number of questions asked each day during question period.

However, the arrival of a 15th member has changed the whole equation. You decided not to give this member a question. Instead, you asked the group of 14 members to share one of its questions with the member for Beauce.

This week, the Bloc Québécois caucus is losing a right it has enjoyed since the 2015 election, namely the right to one question per week per member. This decision is creating an unacceptable inequity between the independent members and those belonging to a recognized party. This inequity also takes away our right to ask one question a week each in the House, a right that we secured in December 2015.

Page 506 of the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, which was published in 2017, clearly states that:

> The general principle observed since the time of Speaker Milliken is that independent Members are entitled to their mathematical proportion of questions.

Furthermore, in the Hansard of June 7, 2007, page 10289 contains this statement from the then chief government whip:

> I think the goal is to ensure that if we take that equation, the number of questions asked per day or the number of questions asked per week and divide it by all the opposition members and we get to how many questions that person would get in a week, then it should be the same whether the person is an independent member or in a party.

Based on this principle, each opposition member should get to ask 1.24 questions per week. Right now, out of the 300 questions asked in the House each week, 120 come from the Conservatives, 54 from the NDP, 15 from the Liberals, and 14 from the independent members. That adds up to 188 questions asked by the opposition.

Now let us look at the distortion caused by this recent decision.

It results in 1.25 questions per week per Conservative member, 1.29 questions per NDP member, and just 0.93 questions per week per independent member.

We believe that one question per week per independent member is a healthy balance to maintain in the House of Commons, continuing the tradition since 2011.

Based on your learned judgment and these democratic rules, which should always form the cornerstone of every member's parliamentary work, we therefore ask that you add a 15th question to preserve the ratio of one question per member.

In closing, I would like to note that I am raising this question of privilege at my earliest opportunity, given that this is the first time this fall that the Bloc Québécois has been penalized by your decision. This week, we only got to ask nine questions, which is one fewer than the number of Bloc Québécois members.

● (1210)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): We will consider the question of privilege currently before us and we will deliberate on it.

Thank you very much.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

COMPREHENSIVE AND PROGRESSIVE AGREEMENT FOR TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP IMPLEMENTATION ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-79, An Act to implement the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership between Canada, Australia, Brunei, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam, be read the third time and passed.

Ms. Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened closely to the speech given earlier by my colleague, the hon. member for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, who, like me, comes from Quebec.

Today, we are debating the bill on the CPTPP at third reading stage.

The member spoke at length about the USMCA during his speech while only occasionally touching on the subject of Bill C-79.

Would he be willing to speak to the tremendous benefits of the cultural exemption negotiated as part of the CPTPP? Side agreements were reached with each of the agreement's signatory countries.

Does my hon. colleague realize that this represents 650,000 very good jobs in Canada?

● (1215)

Mr. Joël Godin: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Quebec, the member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, for her question. It is important to understand that Asian countries pose less of a risk of cultural aggression than our neighbours to the south do. I would remind my colleague that we are not opposed to free trade agreements. Quite the opposite. The reason I did not say much about the CPTPP was because I wanted to focus on demonstrating how bizarre, sloppy and amateurish the current government's strategy for negotiating free trade agreements is.

Again, as I said earlier, things were negotiated and put in place as a pressure tactic, but once the agreement was signed, those tools were left in place, penalizing Canadian consumers with higher prices. I think the member should appreciate that, especially since she introduced a bill in the same vein regarding credit card fees. Her government needs to get its act together and minimize costs for consumers.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, for the record, the member will no longer be moving her bill on credit cards forward in the House.

Like the Canada-European Union agreement and the new NAFTA, or United States-Mexico-Canada agreement, the agreement we are discussing today, the new trans-Pacific partnership, sacrifices our supply-managed producers and, above all, our dairy farmers. There is no compensation for our dairy farmers in the new TPP. Not one red cent. We in the Bloc Québécois condemn this omission in the strongest of terms.

Will my colleague side with the Liberals and support this agreement, even though it does not offer a single cent of compensation for our dairy farmers, or will he stand with us and vote against this agreement, which is unfair to the Quebec farmers who are the backbone of our rural communities?

Mr. Joël Godin: Mr. Speaker, I salute my colleague from Joliette, who asked a very good question. We have to understand that the Liberals took a page out of the Conservative book to draft the CPTPP. I find that interesting. However, they should have kept on drawing inspiration from what we had already done, because we had provided for compensation.

Regarding the new deal, the USMCA, the Prime Minister said throughout the 13 months of negotiations that he would protect supply management. That is what we wanted him to do and we asked if he would fully protect it. Unfortunately, we know what happened next.

The government met with farmers and dairy producers yesterday. The Prime Minister spoke of offering "fair" compensation to producers, but before that, his minister said that they would be "fully" compensated.

We heard the same thing in the House today. The language is shifting. Farmers now see the true face of this government. As on many other files, it is not keeping its promises.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, Canadians in all regions of the country will recognize that trade deals, whether with the U.S. and Mexico or the comprehensive trade pact with the TPP partners, are good for Canadians overall.

Members have given a lot of attention to the supply management issue. It was a Liberal government that established that system and this Liberal government is committed to continuing to support that system. The Liberal government has also been very supportive of our rural communities, in particular our farming communities.

At the very least, could the member across the way acknowledge that the Conservatives support trade agreements? This trade agreement will benefit all Canadians. I believe the Conservatives are supporting it for that very same reason.

● (1220)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Godin: Mr. Speaker, the only party in this House that knows the economy, works to ensure prosperity and diligently develops important and efficient economic mechanisms is the Conservative Party. We cannot just close off markets. We wanted a lot more and we would have gotten a lot more. That is what we are saying. Unfortunately, Canadians chose a Liberal government in 2015, and we have to live with that.

The Liberals sacrificed supply management without getting anything in return. The House is about to shut down for a week. We are going back to our ridings, and Monday is the harvest festival. I hope our farmers will be able to sell their crops and keep their farms going. Happy Thanksgiving to all.

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will use my time to demonstrate why the progressive agreement for trans-Pacific partnership, or CPTPP, which Bill C-79 seeks to implement, is a bad deal.

The Liberals and the Conservative Party seem rather eager to get this bill passed. Try as I might, I cannot comprehend why. There have been extensive studies done in committee. Serious discussions needed to take place, but we should also have had more time to discuss the matter here, in the House. No one even bothered to listen to the evidence presented in committee. More than 400 witnesses appeared before the Standing Committee on International Trade, and comments were made by more than 60,000 people, 95% of which had negative things to say about the trans-Pacific partnership.

It is not just the NDP saying this. The people have spoken, loud and clear. If 95% of the 60,000 people having commented believe that it is a bad deal, I think the message is clear. As usual, however, the Liberals and Conservatives are doing as they please, totally disregarding what the people are saying. Holding consultations is all well and good, but they need to listen to what the people have to say, even if it does not always suit their agenda.

We were all elected to represent the people and to serve their interests, not ours. The NDP will always support agreements between Canada and other countries, despite what the government says and everything that has been said in the House during debate on Bill C-79. However, we do not want a deal at any cost. That is what is important. There are several reasons why this agreement does not deserve the progressive seal that the government likes to give it, and I will have the opportunity to present them in my speech.

We saw the same thing when the Conservatives were in power, and unfortunately, it is continuing under the Liberal government. We keep signing bad agreements. The more things change, the more they stay the same.

The government has allocated too little time to debate Bill C-79. I must point out that the Liberals and their Conservative friends allowed a time allocation motion on Bill C-79 to be passed in order to significantly reduce the hours of debate in the House. Because of the adoption of this motion, the number of hours of debate has been reduced from 10 to 4. That is irresponsible. It is important to debate this bill as much as possible so that we can improve it and serve the needs of the people.

We are now at third reading, and I would remind the House that the NDP would like to delete a few clauses from the bill. Several amendments were presented by my colleague from Essex and were unfortunately rejected out of hand.

I would like to focus on some motions moved by my hon. colleague dealing with clauses 11, 12, 19 and 50 of the bill. Clause 11 definitely needs to go, because it grants the minister exclusive power to appoint the members of the various panels. We would prefer that they be appointed in consultation with the ministers of environment and labour as well as with the public, as was suggested in committee.

Clause 12 should also be deleted, as it provides that the government's contribution to the commission's expenses not be disclosed. I find that unacceptable. We need to be transparent with the people. We sought to remedy the situation in committee by proposing an amendment, which my hon. colleague from Essex championed quite well. In the end, we saw the Liberals' hypocrisy at work when they opposed it.

● (1225)

Businesses in my riding are already concerned. They know that the agreement will not benefit them in the slightest and tens of thousands of jobs are in jeopardy around the country. Farms and small and medium-sized businesses are at risk of shutting down. This was already being reported back in March 2018 in Le Quotidien du Saguenay Lac-Saint-Jean; a dozen farm operations in the region closed up shop over the past year. Dairy farmers in Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean were already aware of the dangers of the breaches that the Liberals have opened in supply management.

Again back in March, Daniel Gobeil, president of the Producteurs de lait du Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean, said he was concerned that the negotiations around what was then still called NAFTA would once again be conducted at the expense of dairy farmers. He was right to be concerned. After what they went through with CETA, he said that dairy farmers did not want to be used as bargaining chips anymore, and yet, that is precisely what happened. Smaller operations saw their profits drop, and the climate of uncertainty created by the Liberals has discouraged some from investing, leaving them with no choice but to bow out.

To please the other CPTPP members, the Liberals opened a crack in our supply management system, a crack that has no reason to stay open, given that the United States withdrew from the agreement over two years ago. Members will recall that it was the U.S. that made this request. When they withdrew, a decision was made to keep it in the agreement anyway. The Liberal government gave up 3.25% of our domestic dairy market, 2.3% of our egg market, 2.1% of our chicken market, and 2% of our turkey market. Farmers cannot accept this wrongful decision, especially since the other countries did not ask for any concessions on our supply management system. I repeat, the United States was the only country to demand this, and it is no longer part of the agreement.

The cracks in our agrifood market are adding up. First, there was the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, which has had dramatic repercussions on our cheese producers. Now we have the CPTPP and soon the USMCA, in which the Liberals handed over our agricultural market to the Americans. One crack, two cracks, three cracks—it is starting to sound like a nursery rhyme. When will the Liberals stop using Quebec's dairy farmers as a bargaining chip?

This is getting to be a bit much. I will give you a concrete example from my region, Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean. Dairy producers are angry. For a brief moment they considered blocking a road in Saint-Bruno with a tractor to show just how unhappy and angry they are. They did not actually do it because they did not want to inconvenience people. In their opinion, the government made false promises on several occasions.

The agreements we are discussing in the House today are affecting dairy farmers. We are talking about the people who feed us, who work day after day to maintain our food sovereignty. These are the people we are attacking every time we reach a trade agreement. We are creeping up on a 10% breach in supply management. Several members have mentioned that here in the House. Imagine if we were to lose a month's salary. We might be the first ones to complain.

● (1230)

I understand why they are angry and why they no longer believe the government's promises of compensation. We saw that recently with CETA, with the importation of 17,500 tonnes of cheese. A program was offered, but dairy farmers had to invest money in order to receive compensation. Moreover, some of the producers I met with this summer had still to see any of that money. This is unacceptable. I understand why the dairy farmers in my region are angry and why they no longer believe in the Liberal government's promises.

Furthermore, the agreement affects more than just the agricultural sector. It threatens Canada's and Quebec's cultural integrity. As a number of experts have said, the CPTPP has by far the weakest cultural exemption ever negotiated in a Canadian free trade agreement. The government declared that some problematic cultural clauses had been temporarily suspended but not eliminated entirely.

The new agreement makes no mention of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, despite that fact that seven CPTPP countries, including Canada, are parties to it. In addition, it prevents Canada from making sure that, in the future, online providers will support Canadian content. The new side letters can only complete or clarify the basic text; they cannot solve every problem. The preamble to the CPTPP is insufficient to ensure that Canada's obligations under the UNESCO treaties will take effect.

First, the CPTPP does not acknowledge any of the internationally recognized instruments of cultural protection, such as the 2005 UNESCO convention.

Second, the agreement assumes that if free trade is encouraged, the impact on culture will inevitably be positive. Nowhere does it acknowledge the threats and the challenges that it poses to our provinces' cultural sovereignty.

Third, the agreement does not recognize the promotion and protection of cultural diversity as legitimate grounds for taking regulatory action. What effect will this have? A dispute resolution panel under the CPTPP could very well decide to reject the legitimacy of cultural regulation.

In the past, Canada signed free trade agreements where culture is explicitly protected in the preamble, including the 2009 agreement with Peru, the 2012 agreement with Jordan, the 2013 agreement with Panama and the 2014 agreement with Honduras.

I do not understand the Liberals' reasoning. Why make concessions on culture, which puts a number of jobs in jeopardy?

As my party's labour critic, I, too, object to this aspect of the agreement. The wording of the labour standards remains virtually unchanged from that of the original trans-Pacific partnership. That is worrisome, as it renders the standards unenforceable. This alone disqualifies the agreement from being considered progressive, as the government has been doing for quite some time.

Under the agreement, workers whose rights have been violated need to prove that the violation had an impact on trade, which is virtually impossible. As I have stated earlier, the onus falls once again on the workers, who, on top of everything else, must prove that there has been an impact on trade. We saw how impossible that is to prove in the dispute between the United States and Guatemala.

● (1235)

In the original TPP, the United States had negotiated a 12-page labour reform plan. That reform plan allowed Vietnamese workers to have free and independent collective bargaining. Canada could not obtain the same commitment. Instead, we got Vietnam to accept a watered-down version of that reform plan.

The U.S., under President Obama, also struck labour consistency plans with Malaysia and Brunei in an effort to ensure that both countries lived up to fundamental labour standards, including freedom of association and collective bargaining, as requirements for trade under the TPP.

Under the new deal, these labour consistency plans have completely disappeared. The former TPP made sure that governments were able to invoke respect for workers' rights as a requirement for procurement. That was another tool that helped to ensure that international labour standards were taken into account in public procurement decisions. In the new deal, that clause was temporarily suspended.

According to the Canadian Labour Congress, the labour standards set out in the CPTPP are low and in no way guarantee that the basic rights of member countries' workers will be respected. It also does not guarantee the workers' ability to organize and bargain collectively.

I definitely want to touch on the issue of prescription drugs. Not only does the Liberal government not care what Canadians think, it does not care about their health either.

Canada is already second in the world for drug expenditures per capita. There is one hard truth that the Liberals are refusing to accept: thousands of Canadians cut their pills in half, halt their treatments or eat less so that they can afford the drugs they need. That should have been taken into account in the CPTPP.

In my riding, more than a third of seniors put their health at risk, and that worries me greatly. The CPTPP will only make things worse. It makes even more concessions to pharmaceutical companies, which will increase Canadians' annual drug expenditures by more than $800 million.

Furthermore, this deal jeopardizes our country's sovereignty and the efficiency of our public policies.

I still have a lot to say, but I will conclude by stating that the NDP has always supported agreements that are beneficial to Canada's workers and all Canadians.

As it stands, we cannot support the CPTPP. It contains no progressive measures, which is especially disappointing given that over 60,000 people showed interest and made submissions. In fact, 95% of the comments made were negative, but the government brushed them aside.

I come back to the dairy producers from my region, Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean, who demonstrated this morning to show their dissatisfaction. The last three trade deals that were forced upon them have weakened supply management, which affects their bottom line. We need to think about the family farms that feed us and about our food sovereignty.

I will now take questions from my colleagues.

● (1240)

Ms. Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague from Jonquière.

At the end of her speech, she said that the New Democrats were in favour of an agreement that was good for Canadians.

I sat on the Standing Committee on International Trade, along with her colleague from Windsor, who has been on the committee for two and a half years. They have never supported any of the agreements that we have studied, be it the agreement with Europe, the trans-Pacific Partnership or NAFTA.

I would like our colleague from Jonquière to tell me what agreement the NDP could support.

Ms. Karine Trudel: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question. I could give my entire speech again, but I do not have enough time. I would like to take this opportunity to explain what measures would have been progressive and which are not. We did not talk about foreign workers in the trans-Pacific partnership. If we look at the wage standards for migrant workers, there are no protections to guarantee that foreign workers will receive the wages set out in their employment contracts. There are no protections for them. Since we call ourselves progressive, it would have been easy to protect both Canadian workers and those who come here to help us.

Currently, many of our regions are experiencing a labour shortage, but there is nothing in this partnership to protect these foreign workers who are coming.

I also spoke about what happens to farmers and dairy producers time and time again. We must not keep forgetting about them. It was the United States that asked for a concession of 3.25% of the market; the other countries did not ask for it. Why, then, was that not removed? The government decided to leave that in the agreement.

There is no program for our farmers either. In any case, one broken promise after another only creates frustration. That is clear in our regions. In Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, as I said in my speech, people are openly disgruntled and no longer believe what the government says or promises.

I do not know if my colleagues have any more questions to ask me, but I could keep talking about this agreement all day. This is not a good agreement, and it has no progressive value.

[*English*]

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, CCF): Mr. Speaker, the government has been trumpeting the fact that the new USMCA does not contain investor-state dispute provisions. However, we have the government trying to ram through the trans-Pacific partnership, which includes investor-state dispute provisions. Those provisions of NAFTA empowered multinational corporations to directly challenge our democratic laws, regulations and policies before secretive commercial tribunals.

Could the member for Jonquière offer any insight as to why the government thinks it is such a good thing to remove those provisions from NAFTA, and that is a good thing, yet it seems to believe investor-state dispute provisions are somehow appropriate in the trans-Pacific partnership?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Karine Trudel: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's question. We are both former union members, and we often have really interesting conversations about the nature of work itself.

What we are seeing right now is a double standard. The Liberals negotiate one way with 12 countries, and then they negotiate a different way with the United States and Mexico. I do not understand how they could have failed to predict the cost of certain provisions, especially since the United States-Canada-Mexico agreement came after the trans-Pacific partnership. They could have anticipated the cost and made the necessary provisions more cost-effective. As I said, the government calls this a progressive deal, but we see nothing progressive about it.

● (1245)

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my dear colleague for her speech.

My question is about the process. This bill is more than 300 pages long and is very complex. However, after only two and a half hours, it will be debated in Parliament for the last time. Only five or six members will have been able to discuss a huge trade deal between many countries that has a profound effect on our economy.

How can this government call itself transparent? The Liberals promised transparency, but they negotiate in complete secrecy and then say that a short speech by one or two members from each party is enough.

There are also contradictions between this deal and others, as other members have said. For example, Donald Trump wanted a horrible section included in the new deal with the U.S. It has since been removed. However, that section is included in this deal, and the Liberals are quite happy to protect a country's companies instead of its citizens. That is mind-boggling.

How can we call this a good deal if the government has to promise compensation to Canadian farmers for the third time in three deals? Our trade treaties with Europe, Asia and the U.S. are so harmful to our farmers that the government has to compensate them.

Ms. Karine Trudel: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question and I commend him on his impeccable French and his efforts. I am always happy to talk with him, which gives me a chance to improve my English.

This is an important issue, especially for my region, Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean. We have more than 354 dairy farmers who feed us and reinforce our food sovereignty. I have mentioned this several times in the House, but it is not today's topic.

The agreement between the United States, Mexico and Canada is the last straw that broke the dairy cow's back. People, producers and family farms are being attacked and there is no compensation plan. These people get up at 4 a.m. and work well into the night, six days a week. They just want to do their job, but their livelihoods are being taken away. To them, these three agreements mean a loss of one month's wages, and perhaps more.

Today, what is important is that the government get the message. This must stop. Our dairy farmers must be given compensation and consideration. Our food sovereignty is important. We must not accept rules imposed mainly by the United States.

I wonder about the fact that more and more products are coming into Canada, and we are getting nothing in return. More than 58,000 job losses are expected as a result of the CPTPP, not to mention the losses related to the export-import ratio, which are not yet quantified.

So, I still wonder what is so progressive about it. Why is it that the government did not rely instead on the 95% of the 60,000 people who opposed the CPTPP? They are listening to the 5% instead. What is the point of having consultations or committee hearings, anyway? The committee did excellent work, but you cannot listen to only 5% of the people when it comes to an agreement like the CPTPP.

● (1250)

[*English*]

Ms. Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Willowdale.

[*Translation*]

I am pleased to speak about the trans-Pacific partnership. I would have liked to ask my colleague from Jonquière another question, since she mentioned dairy products, but not forest products. We kept chapter 19, which addresses dispute resolution. That is very important to her region, but she never mentioned it. However, that is not what I will be talking about today.

I am pleased to be able to talk about protecting Canada's culture and creative industries within the context of the comprehensive and progressive agreement for trans-Pacific partnership, the CPTPP. I proudly represent the riding of Rivière-des-Mille-Îles. I sat on the Standing Committee on International Trade for two and a half years, and I am very interested in international trade.

As a nation, Canada can celebrate the vitality of its creative industries. Throughout our history, we have established a wide range of dynamic cultural institutions, created a diversified publishing industry, developed a music industry based on Canadian talent, established a prolific digital media industry, and built critically acclaimed film and television industries. Our cultural sector is a powerhouse in Canada's economy, and it is at the heart of our competitive advantage on the international stage. Canada's stories, shaped by our vast, rich diversity, need to be celebrated and communicated across Canada and abroad.

Creative industries drive development and diversity. They create jobs and enhance the quality of life of all Canadians. In 2016, the creative industries accounted for $53.8 billion, or 2.8% of the GDP, and created more than 650,000 direct jobs. That is enormous. They generated $16 billion in exports. Our government believes that the creative and cultural sectors, which account for an increasing percentage of our economy, have the potential to be leaders in accelerating the growth of our prosperity.

Over the years, to promote Canada's dynamic culture, the government has established a combination of financial incentives, Canadian content requirements, tax measures, and other foreign investment and intellectual property policies and tools.

Among other things, the Government of Canada is investing $125 million over five years in Canada's creative export strategy in order to optimize the export potential of Canadian creative industries. The strategy boosts export funding in existing Canadian Heritage programs, increases and strengthens the presence of Canadian creative industries abroad, builds relationships needed to make business deals, and establishes the creative export Canada funding program.

In short, the Government of Canada's cultural policy was essentially designed to create an environment for creating, producing, marketing, protecting and distributing Canadian cultural products in Canada and abroad, which contributes to the economic, social and cultural development of our country.

Our plan helps protect major national institutions, supports industries that reflect our unique identity as Canadians, and creates good jobs for the middle class, as well as economic opportunities in the cultural and creative industries.

Our government believes that Canada must maintain some flexibility in developing policies and programs if we want to create the right conditions for success and achieve the objectives of the cultural policies.

With regard to international trade agreements, our approach has always been to have exemptions for creative industries. In negotiating past agreements, we always tried to leave enough strategic leeway to pursue cultural objectives that support creating, distributing and experimenting with Canadian cultural content. We have also worked to promote cultural diversity in Canada and abroad and to open new export markets and opportunities for artists and culture professionals.

The CPTPP is no exception. During negotiations, our government has always been mindful of the importance of the creative institutions and industries that Canadians cherish and promoting the values that define them.

In public consultations, we listened to stakeholders from the Canadian cultural industry.

● (1255)

They expressed concerns about the original scope of CPTPP exceptions with respect to measures affecting cultural industries, which was narrower than that of the exceptions in previous free trade agreements.

In their opinion, such limits would have reduced the range of accessible strategic options for maintaining the success of Canadian cultural content in an open environment. In order to strike a balance in terms of the cultural protections required within the framework of the CPTPP, the government reached bilateral agreements with every CPTPP member.

These agreements state that the agreement's original limits with respect to Canada's right to promote its cultural industries in a digital environment do not apply within the framework of the CPTPP. These side agreements are important because they preserve Canada's ability to promote and maintain programs and policies to promote, create, distribute and develop Canadian artistic content, including in a digital context.

Also, Canada was able to preserve the original warnings about Canadian culture in the chapters of the agreement dealing with the service trade, investment, electronic trade, goods, Crown corporations and government procurement.

In addition, Canada maintained a special exclusion for the CBC, Telefilm Canada and all similar Crown corporations in the future, which protects cultural institutions' ability to play a key role in promoting, producing and distributing our cultural products.

In conclusion, I would like to repeat that our government is determined to promote Canada's cultural interests in trade negotiations and to protect its cultural flexibility nationwide.

At the same time, our government places great importance on giving Canadian creators and artists every possible opportunity to take advantage of openings provided by foreign markets and audiences.

By insisting that the rules regarding culture in the CPTPP be tightened, our government demonstrated that it is possible to create new and promising perspectives for exporters and investors in a dynamic region that is experiencing some of the strongest growth in the world, while making sure that the industries that help shape our identity and our values continue to grow.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since we have had problems with the Trans Mountain pipeline, and now with Bill C-69, I would like to ask my colleague how the CPTPP can help us as a nation to become more competitive on the international stage.

Ms. Linda Lapointe: Mr. Speaker, I presume that my colleague is referring to Bill C-79 and not Bill C-69.

With respect to the trans-Pacific partnership, we are opening up a market of 500 million consumers. There is no doubt that they want our products, mainly our agrifood products. These products are the ones that are most in demand in Asia. There is an incredible market, and incredible possibilities. The trans-Pacific partnership will help us open up these markets.

[*English*]

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an interesting time for the government with successive trade agreements in a row so that Canadians can compare one to the other. Even though they are with different regions of the world, one with Europe, one with the United States and one with the Asia-Pacific region, Canadians can compare what the Liberals celebrate about one and ignore in another.

Let us take the most recent example of the United States agreement, the "new NAFTA", as some are calling it. In there, the Liberals are lauding the fact that a certain provision called the "investor-state dispute provision", which allows foreign companies to sue us while protecting them in an inordinate number of ways, was taken out of the "new NAFTA". Donald Trump actually was the one who seems to have insisted upon it, yet the Liberals are wrapping their arms around that part of the trade agreement that is now gone and congratulating themselves as it was such a terrible aspect of the trade agreement.

One would imagine that there would be some sense of consistency by the Liberals that in other trade disputes the same mechanism would also not be present, because if it is good with the United States then, clearly, it must be something good with Asia or with Europe. However, that is not the case, never mind the fact that each time they sell one of these trade agreements to Canadians, they also have to compensate dairy farmers over and over again. The promises that are made are never fulfilled, as we have seen with CETA and the TPP. Farmers come back at the end saying the promises that were made for compensation are not there. Any time the government has to compensate a sector, that usually means one probably did not argue and negotiate to that sector's benefit. Thus, the government has to take taxpayer's money to compensate them.

I want to stay on the U.S. trade deal. The penalties against Canadian metals remains in place, and yet the Liberals are popping champagne corks.

Back to the CPTPP, if investor-state protections were so bad that the Liberals celebrated their annexation and their removal from the United States agreement, why did they leave them in place with so many more countries involved in this much larger trade agreement with Asia?

● (1300)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to wish teachers a wonderful World Teachers' Day.

I want to reply to my colleague's comment about how we negotiated successive agreements. We have one with Europe, which is amazing, given that it opens up a market of 500 million people. Then we have the CPTPP, which will open up another market of 500 million consumers. Lastly, there is the USMCA, which represents another market of 500 million people, since it covers all of North America. It is one free trade agreement after another. That being said, I sat on the Standing Committee on International Trade for two and a half years, and I realized that no deal is ever good enough for the NDP.

What international free trade agreement would the New Democrats agree to support?

[*English*]

Mr. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, I am honoured to rise in the House today to discuss Bill C-79, an act to implement the comprehensive and progressive agreement for trans-Pacific partnership between Canada, Australia, Brunei, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam.

Bill C-79 is our government's commitment to the swift ratification and implementation of the CPTPP. Implementing and ratifying the CPTPP would strengthen our existing trade partnerships with Chile, Mexico and Peru, and provide preferential access to seven new markets: Australia, Brunei, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore and Vietnam. Doing so would improve market access to an estimated 500 million global consumers with a combined GDP of $13.5 trillion, representing roughly 40% of the world economy. These numbers are truly staggering and offer a glimpse into the endless opportunities afforded by the CPTPP.

This agreement would diversify trade to benefit the middle class and enhance our ability to compete and win on the global stage. As I have previously mentioned during the debate in this chamber over the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, any student of Canadian history knows our great country has been, in many ways, shaped and founded by trade. To this day, nearly 60% of our GDP and fully 20% of Canadian jobs are immediately tied to exports. Our government understands increased trade leads to economic growth and that economic growth leads to jobs for the middle class.

However, this simple fact is currently under siege. As the world slides toward protectionism and isolationism, a regression apparently favoured by some of my colleagues across the aisle, it is vital Canada remains an open society and a champion of open global markets. On this side of the House, we recognize the prosperity of hard-working Canadians and their families is directly linked to diversifying into new markets.

From the ratification of CETA to the recent conclusion of the USMCA framework, our government has long understood a commitment to free and fair trade is absolutely vital. As the only G7 country that is a signatory to all three of these agreements, once CPTPP enters into force, Canada would have 14 trade agreements that would provide preferential access to 51 different countries. Combined, this represents access to nearly 1.5 billion global consumers and over 60% of the global economy.

The complicated progression of this agreement on the global stage, as I have said previously, serves as further proof that these values are currently under attack from protectionist forces. In light of such pressures, I am truly proud of our government for having taken the lead in negotiating this progressive free trade agreement.

Before I continue, I would like to thank the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of International Trade Diversification for their hard work on this file, as well as the members of the Standing Committee on International Trade for their insights and contributions. Moreover, as a former international trade lawyer myself, I would like to thank and congratulate former colleagues in the public service who helped make this important agreement a reality.

It was as a trade lawyer that I gained valuable first-hand knowledge into the tangible benefits that well-crafted trade agreements provide us with every day, and it is from that very same perspective I approach today's remarks. In particular, I would like to discuss six broad elements of Bill C-79 to highlight the very benefits this agreement would have for Canadian businesses, exporters, workers and families. My hon. colleague from Rivière-des-Mille-Îles focused on the preservation of our cultural sector. In turn, I will talk about market access, the service sector, investment, government procurement, and small and medium-sized enterprises.

● (1305)

Speaking first on market access, implementing the CPTPP will eliminate over 95% of taxes being imposed on over 99% of Canada's total exports. From making our machinery, equipment and business services more competitive, to protecting and preserving our unique culture, we are improving market access for Canadian business and have secured an amazing deal for Canadians. In fact, the vast majority of related tariffs will be eliminated immediately upon enactment of Bill C-79. After that, we will see the gradual introduction of more products being included in this list of tariff exemption over a period of 10 to 15 years.

To cite just a handful of targeted market access benefits, Bill C-79 would enhance market access opportunities for Canadian pork, beef, fruit and vegetables, malts, grains, cereals, animal feeds, maple syrup, wines and spirits, processed grain, sugar, chocolate confectionary and processed foods and beverages. It would also eliminate 100% of tariffs on Canadian fish and seafood products, benefiting the salmon, snow crab, herring, lobster, shrimp, sea urchin and oyster industries. In addition, we would see the elimination of 100% of tariffs on industrial goods and consumer products. Finally, tariffs on all Canadian exports of forestry and value-added wood products would be eliminated.

Delving into services, the CPTPP emphasizes the importance of transparency and predictability in order to give Canadian service providers more secure access to CPTPP markets, including a range of sectors for professional, environmental, mining-related, IT and financial services. In the face of a rapidly-evolving and modernizing global digital economy, the importance of these changes cannot be overstated.

Speaking of investment, this government has gone above and beyond the original conditions set in the TPP to better protect our investors, using Canada's negative list approach. Investors will be protected by provisions such as expropriation and denial of justice, backed by robust mechanisms for the resolution of investment disputes.

On non-tariff measures, Bill C-79 proposes to implement provisions related to non-tariff measures. Non-tariffs measures, as members are aware, refer to provision introduced regarding technical barriers to trade that will protect the key market access gains written into the agreement for the unnecessary and discriminatory regulatory burdens.

Moving to small and medium-sized enterprises, this government recognizes the importance of SMEs to the Canadian economy, which to do this day represents approximately 90% of our private sector jobs in Canada that will benefit from the provisions of this agreement. As a result, we have made it a priority to support SME access to the relevant data and information, a first among Canadian free trade agreements.

Provisions such as improved transparency, enforceable provisions on state-owned enterprises to promote fair business practices and an electronic commerce framework for cross-border data flows and server localization requirements have been made available to better protect Canadian businesses and encourage them to enter into the global market. These new measures will not only place Canadian businesses on the global value chain, but help them compete and thrive.

When our government came into office in 2015, in keeping with our commitment to evidence-based policy-making that listened to the needs and interests of Canadians, we held extensive consultations on the CPTPP, including over 41,000 correspondences and 265 interactions and meetings with more than 530 stakeholders. We did so to ensure a deal that promoted the creation of new jobs and benefits for Canadian families. The end result of this process is an ambitious and progressive trade agreement that will not only benefit Canadian businesses, workers, and families, but will certainly serve as a landmark for global trade arrangements moving forward.

● (1310)

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we understand that all of this debate is happening under a time allocation. Forcing down Parliament's throat another trade agreement is the typical tactics we saw from the previous government. When the Liberals were in opposition, they loathed time allocation, saying it was undemocratic.

Embedded in this more than 300-page trade agreement is investor-state protection. The Liberals have claimed investor-state protections are horrible and they are so grateful the U.S. trade deal does not include this. They like it in one place, but not in another. They want us to trust them; they are Liberals.

If it was so terrible in the U.S. trade deal, why are they so thrilled to have the exact same provision in a trade deal with so many more countries?

Mr. Ali Ehsassi: Mr. Speaker, I would like to emphasize that provisions in each one of these investment agreements are very distinct. To take one and criticize it and then assume that all other agreements are exactly the same is truly not fair. In this agreement, if the hon. member does take the time to look at the provisions, he will see that the most progressive elements are very much contained it.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): It being 1:15 p.m., pursuant to order made on Wednesday, October 3, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of the bill now before the House.

● (1315)

[*English*]

The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Pursuant to Standing Order 45 the recorded division stands deferred until Monday, October 15, at the ordinary hour of daily adjournment.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, if you would canvas the House, I am sure you would find unanimous consent to see the clock at 1:30 p.m. so we could begin private members' hour.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Accordingly the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES, SKILLS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE STATUS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. David Yurdiga (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC) moved:

> That the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities be instructed to provide recommendations for legislative and policy changes necessary to ensure that the needs of persons with episodic disabilities caused, among other things, by multiple sclerosis, be adequately protected to ensure equity in government policy to support Canadians across all types of disability; that the Committee report to the House by February 2019; and that it be instructed to request a comprehensive government response to its report, pursuant to Standing Order 109.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am here today to discuss an issue near and dear to my heart. Like so many Canadians, I have experienced first-hand the trauma of a loved one being diagnosed with an episodic disability.

My wife Kathy was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 2004, and since then my family and I have worked to navigate the complexities of life with MS both for the individual and for the family.

In partnership with the MS Society of Canada, I am proud to bring forward private member's Motion No. 192, a motion to ensure persons with episodic disabilities like MS would be adequately protected and treated fairly within Canadian legislation.

The effects of MS are not just physical; they are also emotional, psychological and financial. When individuals or their loved ones are diagnosed with MS, life can suddenly turn on a dime. One day their body behaves normally and the next it refuses to listen.

MS can happen to anyone, without warning and often in the prime of one's life. MS is an unpredictable, chronic and often disabling disease of the central nervous system. MS is a disability with both visible and invisible symptoms, which can range in severity from moderate to severely debilitating. Loss of coordination, vision and cognitive impairments, extreme fatigue, bladder problems and mood changes are all associated with MS.

MS and all episodic disabilities impact most Canadians, not only the affected individuals but also their families and their friends who must come together to manage the illness. No one should have to face MS or any disability alone. There is an undeniable fact that episodic disabilities are treated differently than other chronic diseases and disabilities by government policy. These inequalities have negative effects on those living with episodic disabilities and their loved ones.

This motion seeks not only to address concerns for people living with MS, but for all Canadians living with episodic disabilities, including cancer, HIV, epilepsy, Crohn's disease, diabetes, arthritis, and the list goes on. The motion looks to support individuals living with episodic disabilities until one day we find a cure.

We need to remember that a cure is possible. Though there have been great improvements for people living with MS, there is still much unknown about this disease. However, researchers are zeroing in on what causes MS and are exploring ways to repair the damage it causes and ways to prevent MS from occurring. The best current evidence suggests lifestyle, environmental, genetic and biological factors all contribute. All these areas are being actively examined.

Studies funded by the MS Society are asking if certain risk factors such as gender, age, family history or lifestyle habits impact a person's susceptibility to MS. Until we find the answer, Canadians with episodic disabilities face challenges securing employment, income and disability supports. They struggle daily to access treatments, comprehensive care, housing and moving around in the communities where they live. For these Canadians, research is crucial to obtaining new treatments and a better quality of life.

Multiple Sclerosis impacts hundreds of thousands of Canadian families every year. Our country has the highest rate of individuals affected by MS in the world, with over 77,000 Canadians living with MS or approximately one in every 385 Canadians. That is a large number. Women are three times more likely to be diagnosed than men. These are moms, grandmothers, sisters, daughters and friends.

Christine Sinclair, two-time Olympic bronze medallist and a Canadian women's national soccer team captain, knows first-hand the impacts of MS as her mom lives with MS. She recently shared a story in a MS Society blog post.

● (1320)

She writes:

> When you're a kid, your parents are indestructible, and that's what my mom was to me. Indestructible. But as years went by, I watched MS chip away at aspects of her life, and her fight against the chronic disease became tougher and tougher....
>
> Today, my mom is still the strongest person I know and my number one champion. She currently resides in a care home, which can be challenging at times. Cognitively, she's still my mom—friendly, social, and as sharp as ever—but physically, she's placed in a facility where she is 20 years younger than everyone else.

MS is typically diagnosed between the ages of 15 and 40. These are peak years for Canadians who are getting an education, establishing careers and raising families. A student with MS may not be able to hold a pencil and complete an exam. A person with MS has difficulty holding down a job, because the disease is unpredictable in nature and causes lateness, absence and sometimes even an inability to type on a keyboard. A new mother diagnosed with MS may have difficulty holding and feeding her own newborn baby.

People living with MS are our co-workers, our families, our friends and our children. These are the people who are impacted by the disease every day, every hour and every minute, whether the symptoms show or not.

Marilyn Lenzen, diagnosed with MS 18 years ago, is one of these Canadians. She wants to ensure that supports are there for all Canadians affected by MS. For her, it is all about raising awareness.

She says:

> People are willing to listen—they want to know what they can do to help change the lives of people affected by MS. MS needs to be viewed as an episodic disease, which sometimes keeps us out of the workforce. We need flexibility.

For me, this issue hits even closer to home. At the time of my wife's diagnosis, we owned a business we had built from the ground up. Kathy managed the office administration and payroll. When she was diagnosed, she lost complete use of her right arm. Being right-handed, she was devastated.

MS, along with other episodic diseases, is unpredictable. We had no idea how long the attack would last or if she would recover from it at all. Would it be permanent, or would she only partially recover?

Since the business was our own, we were able to make changes to Kathy's duties and pull some of our staff into the office to help. Many people with episodic diseases do not have that same luxury. When their episodes flare up, they may be forced to take time off work, resulting in lost wages or even a loss of employment.

For my wife Kathy, things like writing, filing and taking messages became very difficult, as did putting on her earrings and getting dressed, operating a can opener and folding clothes, and the list goes on. Thankfully, our children at the time were 17 and 13 and could help with all the household chores.

There are many people with MS who may not have the same luxury of a supportive family network to lean on. They might have to hire help, which can be very expensive.

Unfortunately, persons with episodic disabilities are treated differently, not only by society but by government legislation as well. While the symptoms of these disabilities are not constant, the lifestyle and employment limitations they cause are just as devastating as many permanent disabilities.

Support for persons with disabilities in Canada is built on a binary switch: either people can or cannot work. However, life for people with MS is not that black and white. For some, it is progressive in nature, with a continued worsening of symptoms over time. Some are able to work; others are not. Some can work part-time, with their episodic symptoms unexpectedly interrupting their work progress.

● (1325)

Programs like employment insurance do not adequately consider the episodic nature of certain disabilities, often forcing Canadians out of the workplace entirely or prematurely.

It is up to us, the Canadian government, to take a stand and make fighting MS and other episodic disabilities a priority. This motion would put the steps in place to develop better public policy to address people living with episodic disabilities like MS until a cure is available. It also seeks to ensure that all Canadians with disabilities are treated with equity in Canadian legislation. We need Canada's government to support critical steps to improve life for people living with episodic disabilities.

This private member's motion aims to achieve four key objectives: create better employment supports for people living with MS and other episodic disabilities; improve income and disability support for people affected by MS and other episodic disabilities; increase access to treatment, comprehensive care and housing; and invest in fundamental research for episodic disabilities like MS.

Updating employment supports and programs is key to making lasting progress by including "episodic disability" in the definition of disability. We want to make sure that people with episodic disabilities remain in the workplace longer and are able to perform their duties. We want to make sure that access is a reality. By making access a reality, we can increase access to treatments and comprehensive care and housing for those who need it. That is a win for all Canadians.

That is why I sponsored private member's Motion No. 192. It was to ensure that the needs of persons with episodic disabilities, such as multiple sclerosis, were adequately protected and to ensure equity in government policy to support Canadians across all types of disabilities.

I am asking members to join me in solidarity to take action to help improve the quality of life for people with MS and all episodic disabilities. Motion No.192 is a bold motion and only seeks to advance the quality of life for those living with episodic disabilities.

The text of the motion reads:

> That the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities be instructed to provide recommendations for legislative and policy changes necessary to ensure that the needs of persons with episodic disabilities caused, among other things, by multiple sclerosis, be adequately protected to ensure equity in government policy to support Canadians across all types of disability; that the Committee report to the House by February 2019; and that it be instructed to request a comprehensive government response to its report, pursuant to Standing Order 109.

Let us work together to better understand the needs and concerns of Canadians living with episodic disabilities like MS and make Canada a leader in smart public policy through which everyone wins.

● (1330)

Ms. Kate Young (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Science and Sport and to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility (Accessibility), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member and appreciate his coming forward and talking about his most personal story with his spouse, someone living with MS. The fact that more Canadians suffer from this dreadful disease than anyone else in the world is something we really have to take seriously. Episodic disorders like MS are very individualized to the person. My heart goes out to him and his family.

I want to talk about the present bill, Bill C-81, which is currently being studied by the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons With Disabilities. The bill actually includes specific mention of episodic disabilities in its definition of disabilities to ensure consideration of the particular accessibility needs of Canadians with this type of disorder.

The member's motion calls for the committee to report to the House by February 2019. I wonder if the member would be flexible in his timeline. It is important to give the committee the time it needs to make sure that it hears all questions and answers about this very important issue.

Mr. David Yurdiga: Mr. Speaker, MS is important, as are all the other episodic disabilities. We have to make it a priority. On being flexible, well, how flexible? Is it two, three or six months? For me, it is about now and making a change to better the lives of everyone who is suffering from an episodic disability.

I am open to suggestions, but let us get this done.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague and friend for bringing this very important motion to the House of Commons.

I know that time is of the essence. Therefore, I hope that there is co-operation from all sides to make sure that this motion is brought to life and that we begin some serious work on this important issue.

Why is time so important, and why, running into 2019, is it important to get this done as soon as possible? I would ask the hon. member to re-emphasize the importance of time for this bill.

Mr. David Yurdiga: Mr. Speaker, time is important for a lot of reasons. There are many people who do not have access to treatment. They cannot afford it. I will give an example from our circumstances, which I can relate to. When my wife needs a certain treatment, every time we have to go back to a specialist. It takes six months to a year to get her in. She cannot get the treatment she requires unless we pay for it ourselves, which we do. There are other people out there who do not have the ability to get that money to pay for these services on their own. I am here for those people, the people who are struggling to put food on their tables while trying to deal with their episodic disabilities.

We need to help those people now, not tomorrow, not next year, and not five years from now. We need to do it now, and the faster the better. Let us get a move on this. Let us make sure that we are looking after our fellow Canadians.

● (1335)

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by thanking my hon. colleague for bringing forward this important issue and, in particular, for sharing his personal stories about the importance of this issue. Of course, the impact of episodic disabilities is not limited to his family but also is significant for Canadians in every part of our country.

Our government understands that people with episodic disabilities such as MS, arthritis, diabetes, chronic pain and some types of mental health issues as well face particular barriers to their social and economic participation in society. At its core, what this motion seeks to do is to have a committee study the issue of episodic disabilities to ensure the people who live with these disabilities are adequately protected.

With respect to my hon. colleague's motion, before I commit on the spot to what seems like a sensible thing to study, I would like to have the opportunity to chat with some of my colleague who serve on the committee to ensure, first, that episodic disabilities would be part of the study on Bill C-81, and to ensure that we are taking steps in that bill to address the issue. If it turns out that this motion would indeed make a difference and not duplicate the work, it would have my support.

Episodic disabilities are characterized by fluctuating periods of wellness and periods of illness or disability. These periods may vary in length, severity and predictability. In 2012, almost 3.8 million Canadians reported having a disability that limited their daily activities. This figure includes people with episodic disabilities.

Persons living with disabilities often face more challenges in the labour force than those without disabilities. In 2011, close to half, or 47%, of 15-year-olds to 64-year-olds living with disabilities reported that they were employed. The figure for their contemporaries without disabilities was 74%. Employment is one of the key aspects of independent living and full participation in society. As such, the Government of Canada strives to empower all adults of working age, including people with episodic disabilities, to fully contribute to their communities and achieve their personal goals.

Our government is committed to supporting people with all forms of disabilities. One of our important initiatives is to remove barriers in areas of federal jurisdiction. On June 20, 2018, we tabled in Parliament Bill C-81, the accessible Canada act. I should stress that barriers can not only be physical in nature, such as access to built infrastructure like buildings, but that attitudinal barriers can also limit access and full inclusion. For example, persons living with disabilities can face discrimination in their workplaces or in seeking employment.

Earlier, I mentioned the discrepancy between the employment rates of those living with disabilities compared with other Canadians. However, the survey indicated that 51% of potential workers in that age group thought employers considered them disadvantaged as a result of their condition. This simply is not right. Under the new proposed legislation, organizations falling within federal jurisdiction would be required to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility, including in the area of employment.

Under this important bill, the Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility would be responsible for the act and would implement aspects of it related to employment across all sectors within federal jurisdiction, including transportation, broadcasting and telecommunications.

Bill C-81 would also make use of a broader definition of disability. This speaks to the content of the motion in particular, because the definition includes a specific reference to episodic disabilities to signal our commitment to reducing barriers for people who live with episodic conditions. If passed, Bill C-81 would require consideration of the particular accessibility needs of people with a variety of disabilities, including episodic disabilities such as multiple sclerosis. For all people with disabilities, we are taking action.

To support the implementation of the proposed new legislation, the Government of Canada has committed approximately $53 million over six years toward a new strategy for an accessible Government of Canada. As part of the strategy, and as Canada's largest employer, the Government of Canada has committed to hiring at least 5,000 new employees who live with disabilities over the next five years. We are also introducing a federal internship program for Canadians with disabilities, and establishing a centralized workplace accommodation fund to better manage workplace accessibility for federal public service employees who live with disabilities. This is real action to effect change, and it will impact individuals who live with episodic disabilities.

These initiatives would support Canadians in accessing secure, gainful employment opportunities. Supporting and advancing the inclusion of people living with disabilities is not new to this government. From day one, we have been committed to this goal and have been improving our programs and benefits to better fit people's needs. This is also why we have a minister dedicated to supporting persons living with disabilities. Our approach is based on collaboration and communication. Notably, we have heard from people with episodic disabilities and stakeholder organizations that these individuals may face barriers in accessing federal supports.

● (1340)

I am proud to say that our government has taken significant action to enhance the federal programs in place to support these individuals. For example, in budget 2018, the Government of Canada announced that it would extend the employment insurance provisions for those working while on claim to sickness and maternity benefits. This would allow claimants dealing with an illness or injury to have greater flexibility managing their return to work and to keep more of their employment insurance benefits. This measure could have a positive impact on improving workforce attachment for people with episodic disabilities.

In 2017, the CRA reinstated the disability advisory committee, a committee of 12 members and two co-chairs, including people living with disabilities, advocates from the disability and indigenous communities, qualified health practitioners and tax professionals. This committee is mandated to advise the Minister of National Revenue and the commissioner of the CRA on interpreting and administering tax measures for Canadians living with disabilities in a fair, transparent and accessible way.

Enhancing the accessibility of the CRA's services to persons living with disabilities, including those with episodic disabilities, is an ongoing effort that will be greatly assisted by the committee's work. The Government of Canada is also committed to filling knowledge gaps around the experiences of people with episodic disabilities.

Statistics Canada's 2017 Canadian survey on disability is the first national survey to contain questions aimed at identifying people with episodic disabilities, and will provide valuable information to be used by governments, disability organizations, and other stakeholders. Results are expected to be released later this fall.

In these ways, the Government of Canada continues to implement its commitment to advancing the inclusion of people with episodic disabilities. We will maintain communications with Canadians with episodic disabilities so that we can always improve the support we provide and empower them to get the most out of life.

We believe in a truly accessible Canada, one where everyone has a fair chance to succeed.

I look forward to second reading of the hon. member's motion and having the opportunity before it comes back to the House to chat with my colleagues to ensure that the motion will lead to greater support for those living with episodic disabilities.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank our colleague from Fort McMurray—Cold Lake for introducing this motion to instruct the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities to study the issue of episodic disabilities.

I am also happy to inform him that the NDP will be supporting this motion. We believe it involves very important principles that we support.

Episodic disabilities are a vital issue, as they can affect any one of us. Many of us probably know quite a few people with episodic disabilities. I know I do.

Some people may be wondering what episodic disabilities are. They are disabilities related to conditions like multiple sclerosis, arthritis, cancer, HIV/AIDS, diabetes and certain forms of mental illness. Someone can have both permanent and episodic disabilities. The difference between the two is clear. Episodic disabilities are characterized by varying periods and degrees of good health and disability, meaning that a person can be fully functional at times and not so much at others. That means that their participation in the workforce is intermittent and above all unpredictable. The fact that these disabilities are often invisible and unpredictable is their defining characteristic.

A great number of people are affected by this type of disability. For example, over 4 million Canadians have arthritis; 20% of all Canadians will suffer from mental illness at some point in their lives; an estimated 100,000 Canadians have MS; about 71,000 Canadians have HIV; and close to 2.8 million Canadians have diabetes. This issue affects many of our fellow citizens.

Sadly, it has become apparent that our systems, such as insurance plans and government benefits, are ill-suited to the unpredictable and fluctuating nature of these people's disabilities. For example, to qualify for Canada pension plan disability benefits, a person has to have a severe and prolonged disability. Often, a person with an episodic disability will not have contributed enough at work to qualify for benefits. Similarly, to qualify for employment insurance sickness benefits—which are never provided on a part-time basis, even though episodic disabilities do not affect everyone the same way, as I mentioned—a person must be completely unable to work. That leaves out many of the people I described earlier.

Provincial income support programs for people with disabilities are often restricted to people with long-term disabilities. Short-term disability insurance may not allow a person with an episodic disability enough time off to recover. In order to qualify for long-term disability insurance, the person has to be completely disabled. It is like there is a gap between the different systems, and Canadians with episodic disabilities are falling through the cracks.

● (1345)

These people have important needs. They need us to support them and be there for them. I have talked about the number of people with these illnesses, and we need to do something. For now, the motion mainly sets out broad parameters and principles for a study. The study should be done as soon as possible, which is something my colleague and I both agree on, because this issue needs to be addressed.

To quote Glenn Betteridge, a staff lawyer at HIV & AIDS Legal Clinic Ontario, "People with disabilities have a legal right to participate fully and equally in Canadian society". Giving them the means to do so benefits them, their family and friends, and ultimately all of us. Let us do the right thing and plug the gaps in the existing system.

[*English*]

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today to speak to Motion No. 192, the private member's motion of my colleague from Fort McMurray—Cold Lake. It seeks to enhance government policy responding to persons who suffer from episodic disabilities, including those caused by MS.

I had the pleasure of knowing my colleague from Fort McMurray —Cold Lake for several years before I came to the House. I met his wife, Kathy, when they were door knocking for their by-election, and his daughter, Melissa, a wonderful lady who is suffering under snow in Calgary. She can come home to Edmonton any time. She served on my EDA. I tease David that we have the third best Yurdiga in the House today, but they are wonderful people nonetheless.

His wife, Kathy, is a wonderful lady, She spent countless hours helping out those in Fort McMurray during the disastrous fire we had a couple of years ago. Even with the issues she is facing, she still continues to give to the community, and I thank her for that.

I know my office, no doubt like other MPs here, works with constituents who need help accessing disability resources and, as is often the case, are looking for support from the system that may not be best equipped to handle changing needs, demographic and demands.

Discussions like the one we are having today are essential for establishing an action plan for community organizations that serve those who live with debilitating conditions. This type of discussion, a proper referral to committee to hear directly from those affected, how they can be better accommodated, what needs to be changed and so on, is the best way we can ensure that the needs of those who suffer from a disability, which may not always present signs or systems, are heard.

I compare this motion against the government's Bill C-81, which rather than provide an opportunity to develop a tangible plan with a road map for goals and desired outcomes, seeks to merely increase the bureaucracy and spending and add what will likely be decades more of proposals for upgrading buildings from Infrastructure Canada and PSPC. I have no doubt it will be added to the Liberals' list of "underway with challenges" on the Liberals' fabled mandate tracker.

We need to truly address the needs of persons with disabilities and, like my colleague for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake has highlighted, those whose condition may present episodically rather than chronically. The best way to do this is not through the observed experience of a policy analyst at PSPC or of a bureaucrat whose government mandated focus is fining and penalizing government agencies whose buildings are not up to code.

Bill C-81's information package provided by the government had twice as much information on how it would fine and penalize Canadians than it did on how it would implement the program or how it would help Canadians with disabilities. I would not be so cynical if there were not a clear record of the government penalizing persons with disabilities rather than helping them.

Let us go back to as recently as last year. The CRA began targeting people living with type 1 diabetes, people suffering from autism, as well as those suffering from severe mental health disorders. Autism Canada says that to this day it still is hearing too many stories of people who have had the disability tax credit, sometimes for decades, for their children with autism and it is being taken away.

What is going on with the government that it is allowing the CRA to go after families that have a loved one suffering from autism and now saying "you don't qualify"? Here is a hint to the government. People do not have autism and a tax credit one day and then the next not have autism. The way the government is acting is beyond belief.

The disability tax credit reduces the tax burden of people with type 1 diabetes and others with disabilities. Under the law, they have been eligible to receive it for the last 10 years as long as a doctor certified that they required life-sustaining therapy at least three times each week for a total of 14 hours on average. The government is now taking away tax credits from people who have diabetes or autism even when doctors certify they are eligible under the existing law and policy, neither of which has changed apparently.

This new direction appears to have happened secretly, with no public notice or consultation with the diabetes community. As a diabetes sufferer stated, "It's not like I can snap a finger and this disease turns off." Therefore, I have a question in all of this for a government that is so heavy on the need to consult. Why is it so quick to unilaterally decide on how to handle the issue of the level of disability? This is part of an alarming trend from a government increasingly desperate to raise revenue to fund its out of control spending.

I note that in its accessibility legislation, there is no mention of helping community-based organizations, those that persons with disabilities rely on during their day-to-day lives. People living with a disability do not need additional red tape, empty promises or an enhanced bureaucracy that just increases the amount of redirects they get when they call the department for help.

● (1350)

They need tangible change, something that can be attained by digging into exactly what is working and what is not working through a comprehensive study like that proposed under Motion No. 192. Perhaps the Liberals need to take heed of our record on disability legislation with programs that provided concrete action to address disability-related problems.

The Conservative government introduced the registered disability savings plan, which helps parents and grandparents with children with severe disabilities to contribute to the children's financial security. Over 100,000 Canadians have taken advantage of this program to save for their children's future. It took all of three months from election to legislation to create this program. Compare that to the Liberal record on Bill C-81 with three different ministers, or maybe four when we consider that it started with the current minister of PSPC under a different department. Now it is with disability and sports. With three different mandate letters over three years and it is still not accomplished.

During the former Conservative era, we invested $30 million into the opportunities fund to help persons with disabilities gain employment. We supported caregivers by providing tax credits to help them through the difficulties associated with caring for a loved one. There was over $200 million for labour market agreements for persons with disabilities to assist provinces in improving the employment situation of Canadians with disabilities, millions of dollars for the initiative of the Canadian Association for Community Living to connect persons with developmental disabilities with jobs, millions to support the expansion of vocational training programs for persons with autism spectrum disorder, and the list goes on.

However, the former Conservative government's action on disability resources did not stop with our previous government. The member for Calgary Shepard introduced Bill C-399,, the fairness for persons with disabilities act. This bill would amend the Income Tax Act to reduce the threshold for the number of hours necessary for an activity to be eligible for the tax credit from 14 to 10 hours. In the case of therapy that requires a regular dosage, it would take into consideration time spent on calculating the dosage to qualify for the tax credit. This would protect diabetics and certain rare disease patients for whom the calculation of their dosage takes considerable time. It would also add medical food and formula to qualifying for the DTC in order to add certainty for patients with certain rare diseases. This is the action that we need and action that will help those living with disabilities.

The member for Carleton introduced Bill C-395, the opportunity for workers with disabilities act to ensure that those with disabilities, upon gaining employment, are not net losers when government benefit clawbacks occur. Again, this is real action, common-sense action to help. Now my colleague for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake is introducing this motion to develop a road map that would close the gaps in policy for people who are not always presenting signs of a disability, as is often the case for people suffering from MS.

We need a record that clearly shows what Canadians are saying about how the current system affects them and how it must be changed to help them not only live with dignity but continue to be active and contributing members of Canadian society. Motion No. 192 provides the action plan to do exactly that and I hope my colleagues on all sides of the House recognize what it seeks to do and support it.

● (1355)

Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by saying that our government takes very seriously the challenges faced by people with episodic disabilities.

Episodic disability is a health condition that we all know about but that is difficult to measure and manage because of its unpredictable manifestations. It is for this reason that we take into account the needs of people with episodic disabilities in the development of our legislative programs and policies.

Episodic disability is characterized by moments of well-being and periods of illness or disability. These periods can vary in duration, predictability and severity. It is because of their condition that people with episodic disabilities may have to take time off work and thus use income replacement programs.

In 2012, nearly 3.8 million Canadians aged 15 and over reported having a disability limiting their daily activities, including those with episodic disabilities. People with episodic disabilities often face more employment challenges than people without disabilities. In 2011, almost half, or 47%, of respondents with disabilities aged 15 to 64 reported having a job, but for non-disabled respondents, this proportion was 74%.

Many of us know someone who has an episodic disability, and many people have episodic disabilities as they get older.

Motion No. 192 proposes that the House of Commons request the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills Development, Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities to make "recommendations for legislative and policy changes necessary to ensure that the needs of persons with episodic disabilities caused, among other things, by multiple sclerosis, be adequately protected to ensure equity in government policy to support Canadians across all types of disability."

Our government is well aware that people with disabilities face unique barriers that may limit their participation in our society and economy.

Our efforts to support and advance the integration of people with disabilities are not new. Since day one, we have been committed to this goal. In addition, we have improved and adjusted our programs accordingly. That is also why we have a minister dedicated to accessibility.

Our approach is based on collaboration and communication. That is how the government implements its commitment to people with episodic disabilities. We are committed to supporting people with episodic disabilities through many programs and benefits, such as the Canada pension plan disability program, the disability tax credit and the Canada health and social services disability benefits.

We have heard from people with episodic disabilities and the organizations that represent them that they are not always eligible for benefits of this nature because of the nature of their illness. For example, in June 2018, the Senate Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology presented concerns such as these in its report, "Breaking Down Barriers: A critical analysis of the Disability Tax Credit and Registered Disability Savings Plan."

We are constantly evaluating the extent to which our programs meet the needs of people from diverse groups, including people with episodic disabilities. We also regularly ask for advice on how our programs and policies could be more inclusive and better help Canadians. We appreciate the work of the organizations involved in this regard.

We have already taken important steps to provide better support. For example, in budget 2018, our government announced that it would expand labour provisions for a period of EI benefits, maternity and sickness benefits. The purpose of this measure is to provide claimants who have an illness or injury more flexibility to manage their return to work and retain a larger portion of their EI benefits.

Of course, I would be remiss if I did not mention Bill C-81. On June 20, 2018, we tabled the accessible Canada act in Parliament. Under this new legislative proposal, our government would require organizations under federal jurisdiction to identify, eliminate and prevent barriers to accessibility, particularly in the area of employment. In addition, Bill C-81 would require consideration of the particular accessibility needs of people with a variety of disabilities, including those with episodic disabilities.

Before we introduced our bill, we talked to and listened to stakeholders. During the "accessible Canada" consultations, we heard from more than 6,000 Canadians and 90 organizations.

Our Government recognizes that it is important to ensure that people with episodic disabilities benefit from the proposed accessibility act in the same way as other people.

● (1400)

In response to stakeholder recommendations, Bill C-81 includes a broader definition of disability and specifically includes episodic disabilities. This addition is a clear sign to those with an episodic disability that our government is working to remove the barriers they face on a daily basis. Our government will continue to work with persons with disabilities, including those with an episodic disability. Our goal is to ensure these people are recognized and supported by our policies, programs and laws. Our commitment to inclusion and accessibility is unwavering.

I want to express my appreciation to our colleague for bringing this issue to the House. There is no reason why all Canadians cannot showcase all of their strengths and talents. People with disabilities share the same contributions to Canada's prosperity as the rest of Canadians. Canada is a country where everyone should be able to benefit from our collective prosperity. We will continue our work to shape an all-inclusive Canada.

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to get up to speak to this motion by the member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake. Since his coming to the House three years ago, we have gotten to know the member and his spouse quite well. He has put this motion forward that mentions multiple sclerosis because that is a condition that has affected his household most closely. However, from getting to know them over the past three years, I know that is not the only focus or intent of this motion. He and his spouse are caring individuals and he has put forward this motion to address the multiple types of episodic disorders that exist, not just the ones that have affected his household. I give the member great credit for that and for recognizing that this is a widespread issue across Canada.

It is a fairly simple motion that asks the standing committee to look at the challenges that are out there and at what can be done to change the regulations. That is our job as legislators, as representatives of individuals right across this country who sometimes suffer severely from these types of episodic disorders.

Before anyone gets the impression that everyone suffers to a great extent, I knew the member and his spouse for a number of months before I realized she had MS. She has had an amazing treatment program in response to her condition, to the point where most people would not recognize there is a challenge for her. Not everyone has that same ability. Not everyone has that same support network. That is what this motion is looking at, bringing it to the standing committee to study it to see what can be done and what can be changed in the regulations, within the health care system, within our disabilities act and within our support systems so that all individuals can lead their lives to the fullest of their abilities.

Oftentimes, we have seen people with disabilities who are set aside. Other times, we see people with disabilities in one area who have an incredible ability in another area. I have a sister who was diagnosed with epilepsy a number of years ago. Through good medication based on good diagnosis, it was under good control. Throughout the years, she led a very productive life as a salesperson, but it was interesting how stress would affect her symptoms and reactions. She learned to manage the stresses. They managed to get her medications under control through proper diagnosis and the proper systems out there. These types of situations are more common that most people realize. There are many people in our communities who have disabilities of some sort, but because they have been able to get the support of family, the health care system, and a proper diagnosis, they are able to lead full and complete lives.

Through our disability tax credits and our recognition of the intermittent nature of these conditions and their effects as episodic disorders, we also need to consider those who do not have that full support. These conditions are not always consistent and are very hard to diagnose. How can we help those people get better diagnoses and better treatment, and better consideration when they are able to contribute to the economy at least part of the time, when they are feeling better and feeling healthy, and recognize that there should not be a light switch that switches them on and off employment insurance or disability insurance and those types of things?

● (1405)

As I mentioned, the member is not directing this bill specifically at any one type of episodic disorder. There are a number of disorders tied into this. For example, there are the symptoms of Parkinson's, epilepsy, and stroke, one of the most common health issues out there. Most people think of a black and white situation when it comes to stroke symptoms, but often people who are able to almost fully recover go back and forth in how well they are able to deal with their daily lives. Again, stress is a big part of reacting to these types of symptoms.

The process of diagnosis and providing support to these people can go to great lengths in relieving stress for those suffering the most and being impacted the most. I truly give credit to the member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake for his consideration of this.

The challenges faced are insurmountable. Many of these diseases progress gradually. The symptoms in one day, one week or one year can change totally, either in a short period of time or over decades. It is very difficult for the health care system and the employment insurance system to adjust to the types of symptoms, disabilities and challenges presented to patients.

Putting the motion to this committee would provide the committee with the ability to make recommendations to this House. The members of Parliament in that committee could hear from people who have these types of disorders, from people who treat these types of disorders and from people who care for people with these types of episodic disorders. It is only through that type of process that we, as parliamentarians, can get a full understanding of episodic disorders and make recommendations to government on health care regulations, transfers to the provinces and how our tax system could better accommodate these people better through disability tax credits or employment programs so that those struggling with these disabilities and disorders can lead full lives and reduce the stress in their lives so they can continue to be productive.

I know that my time is running close, and we are getting very close to the end of the day and the end of the session before the Thanksgiving break. Before I close, I would just like to say happy Thanksgiving to you, Mr. Speaker, and to all members in the House, and I especially wish a happy Thanksgiving to the member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake and his spouse, who put this forward.

● (1410)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to speak to the motion brought forward today by the member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake. This is a very interesting motion.

Our government is committed to protecting and enhancing the rights of people with disabilities, including episodic disabilities, so they can reach their full potential. We recognize the importance of ensuring that Canadians with episodic disabilities get the support they need to stay in the workforce and fully participate in society.

As we prepare for the parliamentary debate on Motion No. 192, the views expressed by community partners and organizations will receive considerable attention. We recently undertook a number of initiatives that should improve the inclusion of people with episodic disabilities. Bill C-81, an act to ensure a barrier-free Canada, was tabled in Parliament on June 20. It specifically mentions episodic disabilities in its definition of "disability", to ensure that the specific needs of Canadians with episodic disabilities are considered.

Furthermore, the 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability is the first national survey to include a module on episodic disabilities. This data will be invaluable to governments, organizations working with people with disabilities and other stakeholders.

Episodic disabilities are conditions characterized by periods of good health interrupted by periods of illness or disability that may vary in severity, length and predictability. Some common examples of episodic disabilities include multiple sclerosis, arthritis, diabetes, chronic pain and some forms of mental illness.

According to a Social Research and Demonstration Corporation study based on Statistics Canada's 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability, an estimated 3.9% of people aged 15 to 64, a cohort 900,000 strong, claimed to suffer from an episodic disability in 2012. Some 40% of those people described their conditions as serious or very serious. Many episodic disability sufferers are able to work most of the time.

My time is up for now, so I would like to wish all of my colleagues a happy Thanksgiving. I hope that they enjoy every moment spent with their families and return well-rested on October 15.

● (1415)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

[*English*]

Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until Monday, October 15 at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Orders 28(2) and 24(1).

I want to take this opportunity to wish everyone a happy Thanksgiving, as we can give thanks for living in such a wonderful country.

(The House adjourned at 2:16 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Friday, October 5, 2018

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership Implementation Act

Ms. Chagger (for the Minister of International Trade Diversification) 22295

Bill C-79. Third reading 22295

Mr. Alghabra 22295

Ms. Trudel 22297

Mr. Ste-Marie 22297

Mr. Arya 22298

Mr. Cullen 22298

Mr. Godin 22298

Mr. Spengemann 22300

Ms. Trudel 22301

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Ray Martyniuk

Mr. Peschisolido 22301

Doug Mousma

Mr. Lloyd 22301

Autism

Mr. Anandasangaree 22301

Natural Resources

Mr. Garrison 22302

World Teachers' Day

Ms. Lapointe 22302

Bob Spiers

Mr. Arnold 22302

50th Anniversary of La Magdeleine Secondary School

Mr. Poissant 22302

Entrepreneurs in Vaudreuil—Soulanges

Mr. Schiefke 22303

Labour Shortage

Mr. Godin 22303

Flu Season

Mr. Fyolfson 22303

Science

Mr. Lefebvre 22303

Carbon Pricing

Mr. Benzen 22303

Joe King Memorial Giant Pumpkin Festival

Mr. Eyking 22304

40th Edition of the Buckwheat Pancake Festival

Ms. Brosseau 22304

Nobel Peace Prize

Mrs. Kusie 22304

Frédéric Tremblay

Mr. Lightbound 22304

ORAL QUESTIONS

International Trade

Mr. Poilievre 22305

Mr. Leslie 22305

Mr. Poilievre 22305

Mr. Leslie 22305

Mr. Poilievre 22305

Mr. Leslie 22305

Mr. Godin 22305

Mr. Leslie 22305

Mr. Godin 22306

Mr. Leslie 22306

Ms. Brosseau 22306

Mr. Poissant 22306

Ms. Brosseau 22306

Mr. Poissant 22306

Natural Resources

Mr. Cullen 22306

Mr. Lefebvre 22306

Mr. Cullen 22307

Mr. Lefebvre 22307

International Trade

Mr. Chong 22307

Mr. Carr 22307

Mr. Chong 22307

Mr. Carr 22307

Carbon Pricing

Mr. Lake 22307

Mr. Fraser (Central Nova) 22307

Mr. Lake 22307

Mr. Fraser (Central Nova) 22308

Mr. Gourde 22308

Mr. Fraser (Central Nova) 22308

Mr. Waugh 22308

Mr. Fraser (Central Nova) 22308

Foreign Affairs

Ms. Laverdière 22308

Mr. Leslie 22308

Copyright

Ms. Tridel 22308

Mr. Bains 22309

Natural Resources

Mr. Schmale 22309

Mr. Lefebvre 22309

Mrs. Kusie 22309

Mr. Lefebvre 22309

Mr. Lloyd 22309

Mr. Lefebvre 22309
Mr. Richards 22309
Mr. Lefebvre 22309

National Defence
Mr. Garrison 22310
Mr. Cormier 22310
Mr. Garrison 22310
Mr. Cormier 22310

Status of Women
Mr. Peterson 22310
Ms. Ng 22310

International Trade
Mr. Martel 22310
Mr. Poissant 22310

Veterans Affairs
Mrs. Wagantall 22311
Mr. Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation) 22311
Mr. Kitchen 22311
Mr. Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation) 22311
Mr. Brassard 22311
Mr. Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation) 22311

Health
Ms. Jolibois 22311
Ms. Petitpas Taylor 22311

Pensions
Mr. Duvall 22312
Ms. Tassi 22312

Foreign Affairs
Mr. Nicholson 22312
Mr. Leslie 22312

Public Safety
Mr. Motz 22312
Mrs. McCrimmon 22312
Mr. Motz 22312
Mrs. McCrimmon 22313

Status of Women
Ms. Ratansi 22313
Mr. Duguid 22313

Justice
Mr. Cooper 22313
Ms. Wilson-Raybould 22313

National Parks
Mr. Fraser (West Nova) 22313
Mr. Fraser (Central Nova) 22313

The Environment
Mr. Clarke 22313
Mr. Fraser (Central Nova) 22314

Rail Transportation
Ms. Pauzé 22314
Mr. Boech 22314

International Trade
Mr. Ste-Marie 22314
Mr. Leslie 22314
Mr. Ste-Marie 22314
Mr. Leslie 22314

International Trade
Mr. Weir 22314
Mr. Bains 22315

Supply Management
Mr. Ste-Marie 22315
Motion 22315
(Motion agreed to) 22315

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Foreign Affairs
Mr. Leslie 22315

Petitions
Birth Tourism
Mr. Peschisolido 22315
The Environment
Mr. Cullen 22315
Revitalization of the Old Port of Montreal
Mr. Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs) 22315

Questions on the Order Paper
Mr. Lamoureux 22315

Privilege
Fair Representation during Question Period
Ms. Pauzé 22316

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership Implementation Act
Bill C-79. Third reading 22316
Ms. Lapointe 22316
Mr. Ste-Marie 22317
Mr. Lamoureux 22317
Ms. Tradel 22317
Ms. Lapointe 22319
Mr. Weir 22320
Mr. Cullen 22320
Ms. Lapointe 22321
Mrs. Kusie 22322
Mr. Cullen 22322
Ms. Lapointe 22322
Mr. Ehsassi 22322
Mr. Cullen 22324
Division on motion deferred 22324

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities
Mr. Yurdiga 22324
Motion 22324
Ms. Young 22326
Mr. Aboultaif 22326
Mr. Fraser (Central Nova) 22327

Ms. Laverdière 22328
Mr. McCauley 22329
Mr. Aldag 22330
Mr. Arnold 22331
Ms. Lapointe 22332

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